



Improving waste management at Victoria Leeds shopping centre

Yorkshire, UK



Victoria Leeds, Yorkshire's premier shopping destination, comprises of Victoria Quarter and Victoria Gate and is home to 120 stylish retailers and major department stores. Working in partnership with the centre, ABM proactively presented proposals to save long-term costs and reduce their environmental impacts.

CHALLENGE

- To lower the centre's carbon footprint and improve the recycling rate from 44.72% to 90%.
- To lower waste costs and service charge for tenants.
- To be environmentally responsible, creating and sharing best practices.

SOLUTION

In 2018, an existing ABM team member became a 'Waste Champion' with the aim of improving waste management procedures at Victoria Leeds. They put in place a retailer engagement programme, including site-specific signage, to educate and motivate the retail staff to adopt good waste-segregation practices.

Through collecting used coffee grounds from the food and beverage retailers, they no longer go into waste but are used as a natural soil enricher for planting areas around the centre. ABM also had a bespoke Bug Hotel constructed to encourage beneficial insects for a healthy landscape. Visitors were impressed by this 8ft-tall sculpture in the shape of the Victoria Leeds logo.

"Since 2018, this initiative has contributed to lowering the centre's carbon footprint by handling waste resulting in a lowered amount of collections and reduced transport emissions and costs. The programme also resulted in the introduction of a cardboard baler which is used to bale cardboard for rebate."



New radio-frequency identification (RFID) trackers were installed in all waste bins giving accurate weights of each waste stream and prevent overcharges for non-collected waste. ReFood bins were also installed in restaurants to further save waste from landfill. The centre decided to deploy these bins as a more sustainable method of recycling and recovery of the coffee grounds. ReFood are an organisation that diverts food waste to either composting or for the purposes of Anaerobic Digestion. They use all the food waste generated at the centre to make renewable energy (gas and electric) and create nutrient-rich biofertiliser.

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

Environmental

- Overall recycling rates increased to 94%, surpassing the centre's target.
- The centre saw a 4% increase in recycling in the first six-to-seven months of the programme.
- There was less contamination within recycling bins.
- There was also a reduction in the number of bins.
 - Originally, Victoria Quarter had six Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) and six general waste bins; the site now has nine DMR and two general bins.
 - Victoria Gate originally had 14 general and 12 DMR; it now has 19 DMR and seven general.
- Since October 2018, around 20 tonnes of coffee have been diverted.
- The ReFood composting programme generates renewable energy from waste and creates biofertiliser.

Economic

- Waste budget reduced by £33,000 (42%).
- The compostable waste created from the project contributes to Community Projects and National Renewable Energy Sources.
- The financial savings made from improving recycling are passed back to the retailers in an equitable and inclusive approach. In 2018 (Year 1) £20,000 was saved and as a result, £10,000 was returned to the retailers with the remainder of the budget spent on equipment.

Social

- The programme received national recognition:
 - Green Apple Award for Environmental Best Practice.
 - The Corporate Social Responsibility Award from UK's Green Organisation.
- A member of the team also received the Environmental & Sustainability Award, which had a positive impact on staff morale.
- The programme also resulted in a finalist nomination for the Golden Service Awards for Best Clean Shopping Centre.