

# Environmental & Sustainability Action Plan



**colbea**

A space to work, learn & grow

## Executive Summary

Colbea is a non-profit business support and enterprise agency designed to help new businesses get off the ground and support businesses to develop into successful ventures. Its sole aim is to see the economic prosperity of the region improved through new business development. Colbea operates two business centres in Colchester and has ambitious growth plans to expand into new geographic locations.

Colbea recognises that climate change and environmental degradation is a global issue. Colbea is committed to operating as a sustainable organisation, that considers how its business operations could impact the environment. Colbea is committed to taking action to reduce its operational impact and understands there is public support for environmental and sustainability issues. Colbea aims to educate itself, the wider Colbea community and tenant businesses in environmental issues.

It is Colbea's mission to be ethical in how it operates its business and to reduce its strain on the planet. This action plan and overarching policy will apply to all Colbea employees, stakeholders, sub-contractors and visitors to its Business Centres. This will also apply to the goods we procure, our business operations and services we provide to our clients.

- This action plan provides an assessment of Colbea's environmental impact, the source and investigate reductions or improvement options.
- Highlights Colbea's commitment to be a sustainable, environmental organisation.
- Highlights Colbea's commitment to make improvements to support the community it serves
- This is the first version of Colbea's action plan, this will be under review regularly to drive forward improvements. This is the beginning of Colbea's environmental and sustainability journey.

### Overview of East Anglia

For Colbea to understand how best to improve the environment in its operating area, Colbea investigated the locality. During the investigation period Colbea established.

- East Anglia is the driest Region in the United Kingdom.
- In 2019 and 2020 respectively, East Anglia experienced drought.
- 8% of the region's properties are at risk of flooding because of the risk associated with climate change.
- Like all regions, East Anglia is experiencing milder winters and hotter, drier summers
- In 2019 Colchester Borough Council (CBC) made a Climate Emergency Declaration for the area.

### CBC Climate Emergency Declaration

In July 2019, Colchester Borough Council (CBC) made a climate emergency declaration for the area. Colbea operates its Business Centres in Colchester and should consider how its operations effect the declaration from CBC, in conjunction with the organisations own desire to be a sustainable operator. Colbea will monitor its operations to establish an improvement across the reporting period. This will positively impact the environment within the community Colbea serve and emulate our own strategic goals.

## Colbea's Approach

Following a review of the organisations mission and values in April 2021, the Colbea Board introduced a companywide value of becoming an environmentally sustainable business that strives to minimise its negative impact on the environment. For Colbea, taking action to improve its environmental impact is a priority and has been incorporated into the organisation's strategic objectives for 2021-2024. To fully understand the organisations impact on the environment, Colbea is committed to investigating and monitoring its business operations over the reporting period of 2021 – 2024 and commits to making positive change to improve its environmental impact.

Colbea's strategic goal and commitment is to seek to minimise the use of non-renewable resources, reduce energy usage, increase recycling of supplies and materials, minimise the impact of Colbea's activities on the natural environment and to raise environmental awareness among staff, tenants, and clients.

There is a need for a Colbea to show a flexible approach to reducing its impact on the environment. As a small business there are limited government targets or standardised approaches to direct Colbea in reducing its operational impact on the environment. Colbea will need to monitor itself internally and identify appropriate action. As a result, Colbea will adapt and update this plan regularly, as data is accumulated across the reporting period and as information and technology advances. Colbea should consider how this action plan and overarching policy cross references to existing policies. This approach will ensure that whilst Colbea fulfils its already established commitments whilst also acknowledging the environmental impact that could occur.

Colbea is a small organisation with ambitious environmentally sustainable aspirations. Colbea will seek to work in partnership with local community groups and others organisation to achieve a wider spread combined impact.

To summarise Colbea commits to:

- To provide a monitoring report annually on the environment impact of its operations.
- To report annually on potential actions to improve environmental impact.
- To demonstrate a year-on-year improvement.
- To improve sustainability and green initiatives by 10% over the strategy period.

## Monitoring Reporting

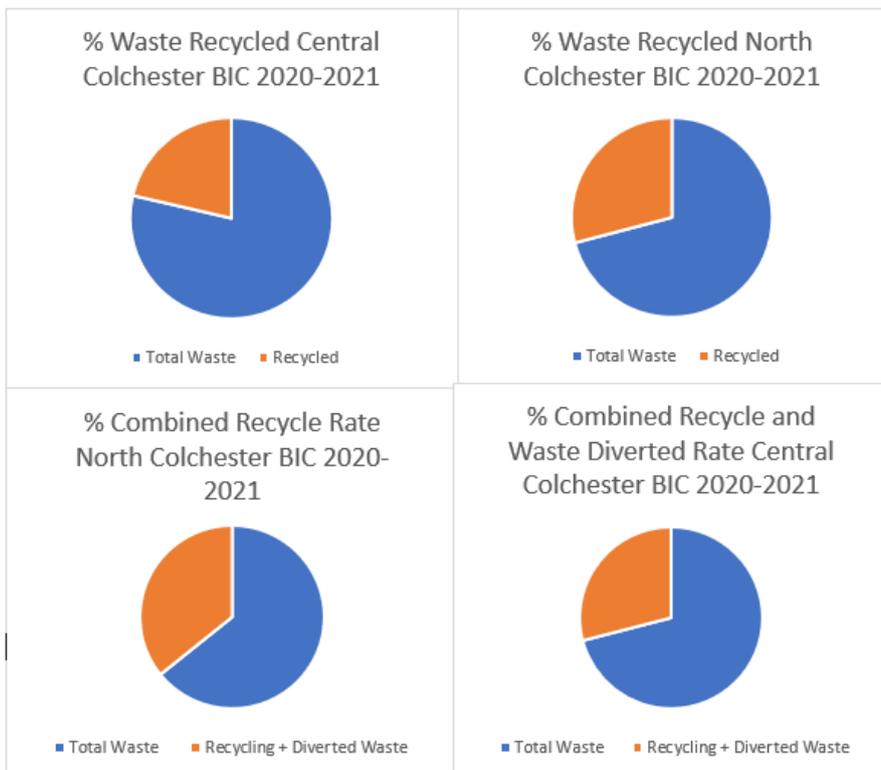
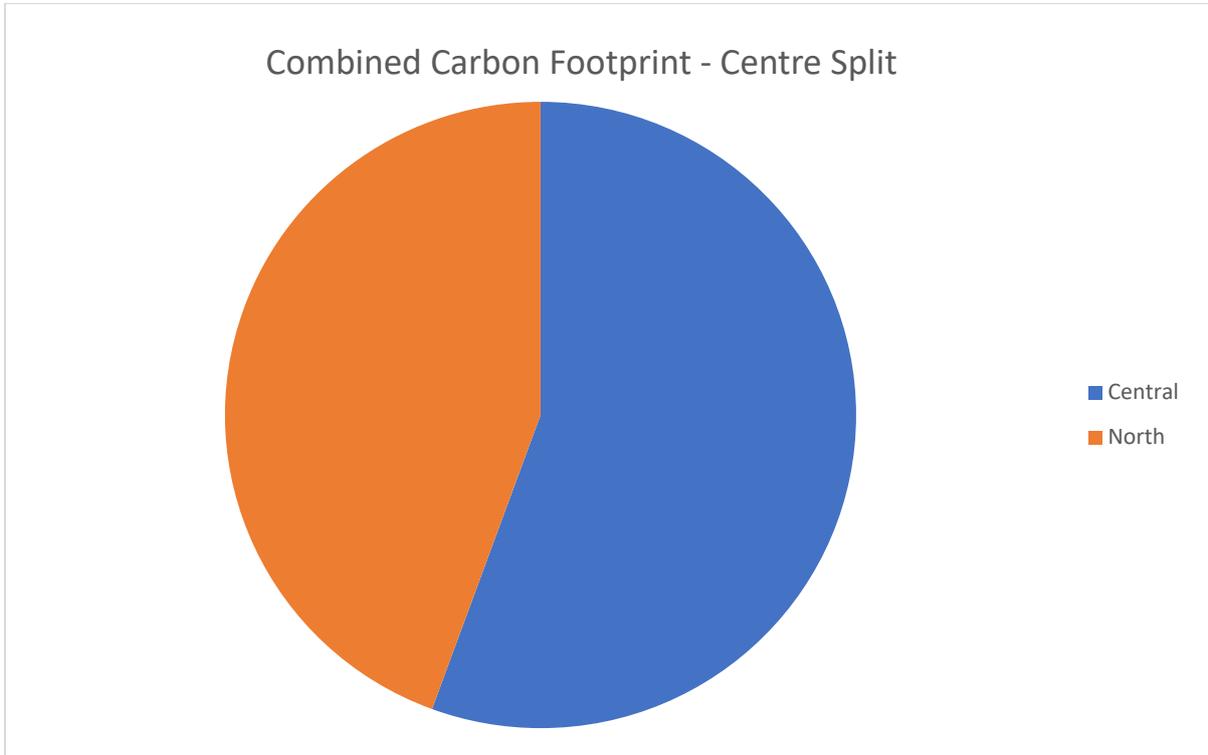
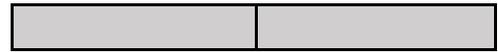
For Colbea to thoroughly understand how its business operations impact the environment and fulfil its strategic goal, an investigation was conducted to calculate its usage in the following areas. Colbea conducted an audit of utility bills, waste reporting and mileage claims for the financial year 20/21. It should be noted that throughout this period Colbea was subject to local and national lockdown restrictions applied by the UK Government, owing to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

### Areas of Investigation

- Water and sewage usage
- Energy consumption
- Waste and recycling
- Carbon footprint

North Business Centre 2020 - 2021				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Electricity	16376.4	17960.6	19196	18444.6
Travel	0	0	0	0
Natural Gas	1745.96	1035.53	15389	40198
Water Consumption	111.m2	46.m2	82.m3	56m3
Waste Sewage	99.9m3	41.43m3	73.8m3	50.4m3
General Waste	100	478	385	499
Waste Divert from Landfill	91	105	97	72
Recycling	68	460	317	173
Percentage of Waste Recycled		49%	45%	25%
*Financial Quarters			<b>Carbon Footprint Calculation</b>	<b>29 CO2e</b>

Colchester Business Centre 2020 - 2021				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Electricity	17929.9	20311	39929.7	53469.7
Travel	68	0	0	0
Water Consumption	50.5m3	50.5m3	66.5m3	66.5m3
Waste Sewage	45.5m3	45.5m3	59.85m3	59.85m3
General Waste	95	865	514	395
Waste Diverted from Landfill	30	124	95	97
Recycling	0	251	208	225
Percentage of Waste Recycled	0%	22%	28%	36%
*Financial Quarters			<b>Carbon Footprint Calculation</b>	<b>36.3 CO2e</b>



## Colbea's Current Position – Results from Monitoring

### Water and Sewage Usage.

At Colbea's Business Centres, the buildings have water meters in place, measuring water and sewage usage. All data attributed to the meters are assumed accurate and up to date. It should be acknowledged that this data covers the period of national and local lockdown restrictions applied by the UK Government, owing to the Coronavirus Pandemic. It is therefore likely the data recorded is lower than pre-pandemic levels. Colbea will need more time to collect data to accurately monitor water and sewage usage.

Colbea's water and sewage needs are managed by WAVE, the business entity of Anglian Water. The water supplied to Colbea is sourced from local rivers and reservoirs. WAVE has contingency plans in place in the event of drought. Colbea should aim to conserve water usage given the likelihood of drought in the areas it operates.

### Energy Consumption

At Colbea's Business Centres, the buildings are powered and heated using a mix of natural gas and electricity.

North Colchester Business Centre uses a combination of gas and electricity to heat and power the Centre. The Business Centre has a sophisticated building management system (BMS) in place that monitors, adjusts and controls the heating of the building. The BMS adjusts the outputs for heating the Centre based on summer and winter settings and a series of thermostats located around the building. The system is regularly serviced and maintained to ensure it is working at maximum efficiency. This Centre uses LED lighting with all lights on motion activated timers.

- Electricity is supplied to Colbea by Haven Power. The electricity is sourced from 100% renewable sources.
- Natural gas is supplied to Colbea by SSE. Gas is a non-renewable source; it should be considered how Colbea can reduce its reliance on gas.

Colchester Business Centre uses electricity to heat and power the Centre. The Business Centre uses storage heaters to heat the building. There is a mixture of LED lighting and florescent lighting in use, with some lights on timers. Due to high electricity consumption the building has a half hourly meter in place.

- Electricity is supplied to Colbea by Engie Power. The electricity is sourced from 38% renewable sources.

### Waste and Recycling

At Colbea's Business Centres, the buildings have the two waste options: general waste and dry mixed recycling. Dry mixed recycling includes paper, cardboard, metal cans and plastic recycling options.

- Colbea's waste is managed by Biffa. Biffa provides Colbea with a customer portal which includes accurate recycling and general waste reporting data. Biffa also actively diverts any combustible and recyclable waste disposed of through general waste, away from landfill to drive higher recycling rates.

It should be acknowledged that this data covers the period of national and local lockdown restrictions applied by the UK Government, owing to the Coronavirus Pandemic. It is therefore likely the data recorded is lower than pre-pandemic levels. Colbea will need more time to collect data to accurately monitor waste volumes, however it can be assumed that recycling and general waste ratios are accurate.

### **Carbon Footprint**

At Colbea's Business Centres, the buildings are powered and heated using a mix of natural gas and electricity.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic during this period, there were limited travel expenses. Colbea should consider alternative modes of travel, that do not include the use of non-renewable sources.

## Action Planning

For Colbea to achieve improvements in its business operations a combination of habitual and infrastructure modifications will be necessary. Using the data accumulated from monitoring its business operations Colbea has identified areas of improvement. There were some noticeable differences identified between our own Centres. Using the data Colbea has identified potential appropriate actions to achieve environmental and sustainability improvements.

### Water and Sewage Usage.

East Anglia is the driest region in the UK and Colbea should therefore aim to reduce water use. Colbea could support the locality further by conserving rainwater and reusing it, reducing the use of tap water within the Business Centres.

**ACTION:** Investigate harvesting rainwater at both Centres.

**ACTION:** Investigate water saving innovations for both Centres.

### Energy Consumption

By comparing our existing buildings, Colbea established there was a disparity in the green credentials of the energy suppliers in use. Colchester Business Centre has a heightened electricity usage in comparison to North Colchester Business Centre, however is using a supplier with limited renewable resources.

- Colchester Business Centre has a high electricity reliance.
- North Colchester Business Centre has a sophisticated BMS system.
- Colchester Business Centre has aging infrastructure in comparison to North Colchester Business Centre.

**ACTION:** Investigate energy saving innovations to lower energy usage at Colchester Business Centre.

**ACTION:** Investigate cost savings of upgrading lighting infrastructure to LED at Colchester Business Centre.

**ACTION:** Investigate funding options for energy improvements for Colchester Business Centre.

**ACTION:** Investigate the impact of decreasing thermostat temperatures at both Centres.

**ACTION:** Investigate changing the electricity supplier a Colchester Business Centre to a supplier with higher renewable fuel mix.

### Waste and Recycling

By comparing our existing buildings, Colbea identified a disparity in recycling rates amongst the Business Centres. It is unclear why this disparity exists and Colbea should investigate further to understand what improvements can be made to achieve consistently high recycling rates amongst at both Business Centres.

- Colchester Business Centre recycles considerably less than North Colchester Business Centre.

- Despite lower occupancy, Colchester Business Centre diverts more waste from landfill indicating recyclable items being disposed of as general waste, that could have been recycled at source.

**ACTION:** Increase recycling ratio at Colchester Business Centre.

**ACTION:** Diversify waste options at both Centres, investigate ink and battery recycling for both Centres.

**ACTION:** Investigate options for recycling food waste or composting at both Centres.

### **Carbon Footprint**

During the monitoring period Colbea calculated its carbon footprint using [Carbon Footprint Calculator | ClimateCare](#). This is the first year that Colbea has calculated its carbon footprint and will require more time to understand how a reduction can be achieved. Colbea will need to monitor its carbon footprint over a longer period. The first year of monitoring uses data collected over the period of national and local lockdown and may therefore not be an accurate reflection of Colbea's position. As a small business a carbon footprint reduction could be limited and Colbea should therefore consider working together with other organisations and local community groups to achieve a wider spread combined impact.

**ACTION:** Investigate joining local community action groups.

**ACTION:** Investigate joining local and national environment groups.

## Sources

[Managing water resources \(anglianwater.co.uk\)](http://anglianwater.co.uk)

[Drought plan \(anglianwater.co.uk\)](http://anglianwater.co.uk)

[HP1022 Fuel mix disclosure Sept20 GB V002\\_graph BF \(ctfassets.net\)](http://ctfassets.net)

[Fuel Mix Disclosure \(engie.co.uk\)](http://engie.co.uk)

[Dry Mixed Recycling | Business Recycling | Biffa](#)

[Landfill Services | Waste Disposal | Biffa](#)

[Carbon Footprint Calculator | ClimateCare](#)