

Improving Sustainability at Westminster's Street Markets



Markets Strategy

In 2018 we ran a public consultation on our markets to understand what residents, traders and market users wanted out of the markets. There was overwhelming support for markets becoming more sustainable.



Nearly 9 in 10 customers wanted to see reduced plastic and packaging



8 out of 10 customers wanted to see increased recycling at markets

From this, we started to investigate ways to improve sustainability across our markets, firstly looking at reducing single use plastic.

Sustainability Audit

In early 2019 we conducted a sustainability audit on the different types of packaging in use at our markets.



Single use plastic items were found across all 6 markets. Including, take away food containers, cutlery and bags.



Compostable, bio-degradable or recycled items were found at 5 out of 6 markets.



One trader was recycling their used cooking oil into bio-diesel.

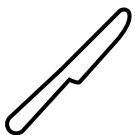


All traders surveyed said they wanted to become a sustainable stall.

The reality of single use food packaging

Following the audit, we began researching sustainable packaging and discovered that the likelihood of these being recycled/composted or bio-degrading is minimal.

- Compostable and bio-degradable items can only break down in industrial composting facilities, where the correct amounts of heat and oxygen must be present for them to degrade.
- These items would need to be collected in their own waste stream and have minimal contamination to allow them to break down as planned.
- At the moment the UK is not set up to deal with waste in this way and as a result most of these items will end up in the general waste.
- Only **⅓ of UK's plastic food packaging is recycled** and what can be recycled is limited.

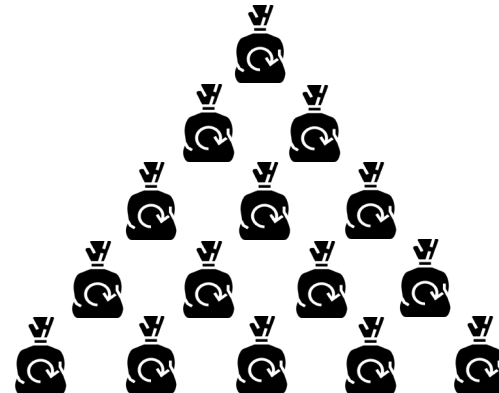


The Problem

We then began to look at the wider problem of take away packaging.

- The UK's lunch-on-the-go habit is creating nearly 11 billion pieces of packaging every year.
- A survey on 1,200 UK office workers says more than half of them were buying takeaway lunches more than they used to five years ago, generating an estimated ...

276 items of single use waste per person per year

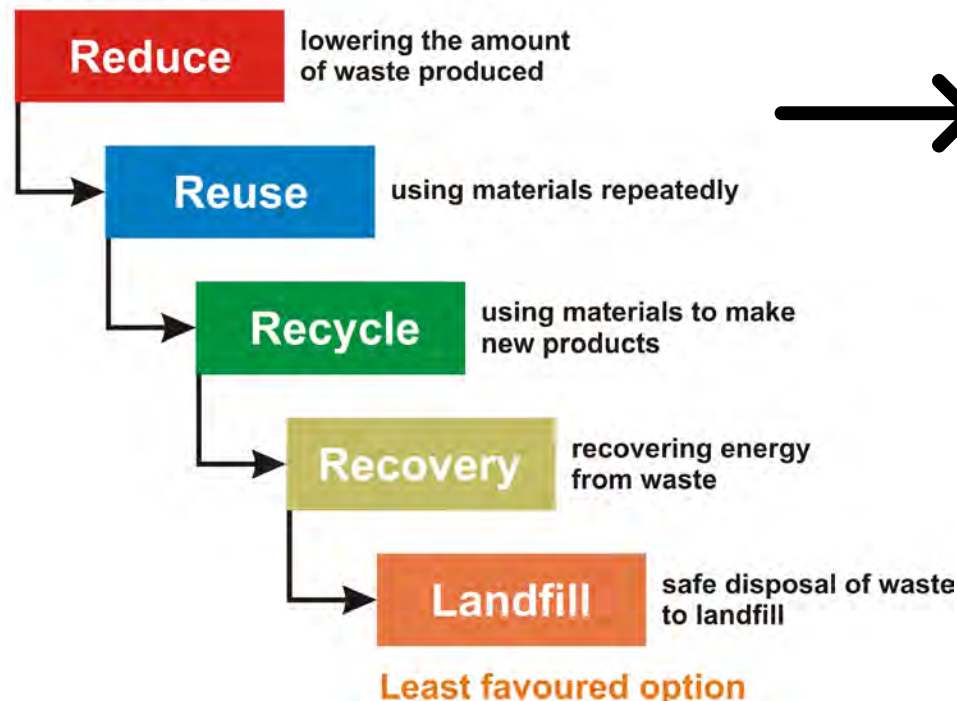


Plastic recycling, compostable/bio-degradable packaging is a temporary solution

What can we do instead?

The Waste Hierarchy produced by Defra sets out the most preferred options for waste disposal.

Most favoured option



We wanted to encourage customers at our markets to **reuse** their own lunchbox to help **reduce** the amount of waste produced at the markets.

However, we recognised that this simply isn't convenient for people.

Additionally, **it can take between 20 and 100 uses** for some reusable items to offset their higher emissions compared to a disposable, due to the greater amount of energy and material required to make a durable product.

The Solution

CauliBox:

A digitally enabled reusable lunch box deposit return scheme that can end the need for single use containers.



CauliBox

London's first lunch box deposit return scheme

- Each CauliBox forms part of a digitally enabled network of reusable lunchboxes – allowing customers to have your take away without the throw away.
- The scheme enables customers to go green by paying a deposit for the lunch box, that can be used to take their lunch away and then be returned for cleaning, ready to be used again and again and again.
- The box itself is made from bamboo fibre – bamboo is a renewable material and has the fastest growth rate of any other plant on the planet.
- The box will withstand up to 500 uses and is both bio-degradable and recyclable.

How it works:

After a customer registers and receives their membership ID, they simply...

- 1. Collect it** – show your membership ID and order your lunch in a CauliBox at a participating food stall.
- 2. Eat it** – enjoy your lunch!
- 3. Drop it** – scan and drop off the used box at a conveniently placed drop off location for it to be professionally cleaned.
- 4. Repeat!**





Pilot at Tachbrook Street Market

- Launched in late July and will run for 3 months
- If successful we will look to roll it out our other markets in Westminster
- The boxes are digitally tracked via a scan in/out system via a SKU code. This will enable us to identify how many single use boxes have been saved during the pilot
- **180 people signed up to the scheme in the first 5 days, far exceeding expectations**



Pilot at Tachbrook Street Market



8 stalls using CauliBox



210 individuals signed up



Over 700 single use boxes saved in 7 weeks



What Next?

Following the end of the pilot in October 2019 we will utilise feedback from users and market traders to improve the scheme.

We are already looking to:

- Develop an app that will improve user experience and eliminate human error in the current scan system.
- Develop a tech focused drop off point – that is able to recognise boxes being deposited to avoid cross contamination issues.
- Invest in multiple box sizes to accommodate for different food portion sizes.

What Next?

Roll out CauliBox across our other 5 markets



100 hot food traders using CauliBox



Sign up 1000 customers



Save 1 million single use containers at our markets by 2021



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