100% of cups manufactured in UK are 100% recyclable

92% sustainably produced wood fibre

2.5 bn cups sold on UK high streets each year

5 specialist recycling facilities in the UK ...
... with capacity to recycle 4.15bn cups in UK today

100% increase in size of European forests since 1950s

4,000 recycling points across the UK

109 Local Authorities with bring banks for cups

0.1% of total household waste in UK

0.7% of total paper packaging waste in UK

100,000 people employed in coffee economy

7.3% growth in coffee shop sector in 2017

11,000 jobs lost if a latte levy is introduced
The paper cup story

Paper cups are the most sustainable and safe solution for drinks on-the-go.

The paper cups we manufacture in the UK are designed to be recyclable and are being recycled. 92% of the cup is made from sustainably sourced wood fibre giving their raw materials a highly valuable second life as other products when recycled. They can also offer a high energy source for energy recovery facilities.

Paper cups make up only 0.7% of total paper packaging waste and 0.1% of total household waste, but we acknowledge that too few are being recycled and we are working hard across the industry to improve on this.

There are five specialist recycling facilities in the UK with a combined capacity to process 4.15bn paper cups in a year. In January 2018 a new nationwide paper cup recycling scheme was launched by 15 organisations from across the paper cup supply chain and the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE UK). Cups have a similar composition to cartons which are currently collected for recycling by 92% of UK Local Authorities.

ACE UK owns and runs one of the five specialist facilities in a joint venture with Sonoco Alcore and is currently reprocessing cups in the UK and the deal will deliver over 400 recycling points across 109 UK Local Authorities. The next phase of the scheme will see further work on developing kerbside collection for cups.

DS Smith recently opened a facility that can process 2.5bn alone, the amount sold on UK high streets each year.

In the meantime, it is important that consumers are not confused about the sustainability and recyclability of paper cups but instead receive consistent, clear information about where they can take their cups for recycling, such as the almost 4,000 recycling points across the UK and through retailers.

The paper cups we manufacture in the UK meet the most stringent health, safety and food hygiene regulations, keeping consumers safe. Reusable cups need water and detergent to prevent health risks, and compostable cups need to be processed through industrial composting facilities.

Finally, paper cups enable today’s on-the-go lifestyle which is driving economic growth in the UK.

In 2017 the growing coffee shop sector generated £9.6 billion and employed over 100,000 people. A ‘Latte Levy’ threatens 11,000 of those jobs.

Our vision is an optimised collection network enabling more effective recycling of all the precious resources currently entering the UK’s waste streams.