

Future of Excellence in Sustainability Award Winner 2026



Whitemeadow

The UK's leading upholstery manufacturer, supplying the nation's retailers with quality sofas for more than 30 years. Its comprehensive net zero plan, entered for the Future of Excellence in Sustainability Award, impressed the judges as an example of a wide-ranging long term commitment to sustainability. [Here's more from the Whitemeadow team...](#)

Why does sustainability matter to you?

Balancing meaningful emissions reductions with the use of more sustainable and recycled materials - while maintaining competitive pricing - remains a key challenge for Whitemeadow. Our approach is grounded in a clear principle: doing the right thing for the long-term benefit of our customers, our industry, and the wider environment. .

How are you creating a more sustainable future in the furniture industry?

We are implementing a phased, long-term decarbonisation programme that balances environmental impact with commercial sustainability.

Solar PV

Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems are being rolled out across our estate on a three-year cycle, allowing each installation to achieve an acceptable return on investment before further capital is committed. This structured approach ensures financial resilience while enabling continuous expansion of on-site renewable generation.

Each solar-enabled site will then be supported by 100% renewable electricity contracts, with on-site generation reducing exposure to energy price volatility. Surplus and self-generated electricity will also support the future electrification of our delivery fleet, further reducing Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions.



Waste Management

We are implementing enhancements to our waste management processes to increase material recovery and create operational value. These changes include the installation of balers for cardboard and plastics, alongside dedicated segregation for metal waste.

By improving separation at source, recyclable materials can be collected more efficiently and converted into a revenue stream, while residual waste volumes are further reduced. These improvements build on existing upstream waste-reduction measures embedded within our manufacturing processes, ensuring waste generation is minimised before recycling is required.

Biomass heating systems

By 2030, our objective is to have installed biomass heating systems at all sites, creating a circular energy model that reuses waste wood generated by our operations to provide space heating.

This transition will eliminate reliance on gas for heating and is projected to reduce Scope 1 emissions by at least 45% from our baseline. When combined with biomass systems already operational at other sites, the programme has already delivered cumulative emissions reductions of several thousand tonnes through the removal of gas supply.

What improvements in sustainability have you delivered?

- **A 161-panel solar array has been installed at head office, delivering immediate emissions reductions and supporting the transition to clean energy**
- **Packaging has been improved to achieve 30-50% recycled content, which is 100% recyclable**
- **The organisation has attained ISO 14001, ISO 9001, and ISO 45001 certifications, alongside FSC accreditation**

Delivery of these initiatives is governed through cross-functional collaboration. The Digital Transformation Director has overall accountability, working closely with the Health, Safety and Environment team and key operational stakeholders. Progress is monitored through defined implementation milestones, emissions tracking, and financial performance reviews, ensuring both environmental impact and commercial outcomes are measured and continually optimised.

How have you empowered employees to create a more sustainable future?

Employee engagement plays a central role in identifying and delivering improvements. Weekly briefings and operational meetings provide a forum for staff to raise opportunities for enhancing sustainability practices. Waste management ideas generated through these sessions were assessed by management, with detailed research undertaken to evaluate feasibility, costs, benefits and implementation timelines.

How have you led and educated others?

Third-party specialists have been engaged to educate and upskill teams on sustainability principles and carbon management.



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