

West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2016/17



Introduction

Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council are working together to manage the effects that our activities have on the natural environment.

This report summarises the activity undertaken to manage and reduce the environmental impacts of our operations during the year ending 31st March 2017.

There is a significant amount of work which contributes to improving the environment carried out by us directly and with our partners which is not covered in this statement. More information can be found via our website.

Our environmental performance in 2016/17

The Councils continued to work to improve environmental performance during the year. Areas of key interest are summarised below:

- CO₂ emissions, compared to our 2010 baseline, are down by 18.2% for Forest Heath and 12.8% in St Edmundsbury with emissions for both councils reduced since 2015-16.
- However, the overall emissions trend for both councils continues to diverge from our targeted trajectory.
- The biggest change in building energy consumption resulted from an increase in gas consumption across a number of sites, in particular College Heath Road Office, Mildenhall where consumption was 91,000kWh higher for the year. This rise in consumption is most likely due to aging equipment and issues with the control and operation.
- Our solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes continue to generally deliver in line with projections and the councils continue to invest in other renewable energy projects where appropriate.
- Forest Heath District Council bought Toggam Solar Farm in July 2016 which supplied 11,106MWh of electricity to the national grid during the year equating to the power consumption of around 3,200 homes and offsetting 4,553 tonnes of CO₂, compared to Forest Heath District Council's annual carbon footprint of 2005 tonnes of CO₂.
- Business passenger car mileage has reduced by 3% in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16, with 435,067 miles claimed.
- Continued growth in refuse collection, recycling operations and grounds maintenance have increased mileage and fuel use resulting in an 4% increase in commercial transport CO₂ emissions.
- Water use across the two councils and the leisure centres managed by Abbeycroft Leisure Trust decreased by 10% compared to 2015/16.
- We retained Green Flag status for four of our public parks and have improved the biodiversity status of a number of green spaces.

Incremental improvements in building energy efficiency are being achieved with further work required to improve energy and water efficiency across all council sites. Much of this will be planned for delivery as part of building maintenance programmes although

other opportunities will be taken as they arise based on a value for money investment approach.

Part of future areas where improvement is likely to be achieved will be through changes to the property portfolio with examples being the proposed developments of the Mildenhall Hub and Western Way accommodation. These proposed changes will also have an impact on staff transport.

The current CO₂ reduction target was aligned to that adopted by Suffolk Climate Change Partnership¹, to which both councils are partners. The Partnership's new target of a reduction in absolute carbon emissions of 35% on 2010 levels by 2025 and 75% by 2050, was adopted in March 2017 and is generally in line with the UK Climate Change Act 2008. In response to this change and as part of the review of the current West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy, the councils are reviewing the current CO₂ emissions reduction target. Adopting the county-wide target would be consistent with reductions needed to meet the Paris Climate Change Agreement: to limit global warming to below 2°C.

More detailed performance against our objectives and targets is set out in the following pages.

¹ <http://www.greensuffolk.org/assets/Greenest-County/SCCP/Climate-Change/Suffolk-Climate-Action-Plan-3.pdf>

Greenhouse gas emissions arising from Council activities

Target: Reduce greenhouse gas (CO₂e) emissions² by 60%

Target date: 2025

Baseline year: 2010

Baseline (2010 recalculated July 2016):

Forest Heath	2,453 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	5,136 tonnes CO ₂ e

2016/17 performance

Forest Heath	2,005 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	4,479 tonnes CO ₂ e

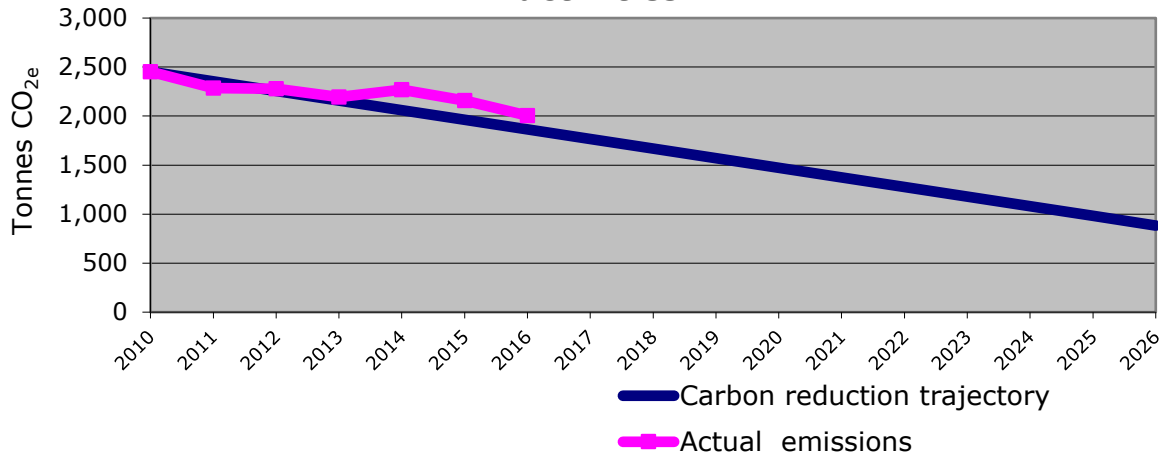
Comment

The carbon footprint of the councils' operations continued to reduce:

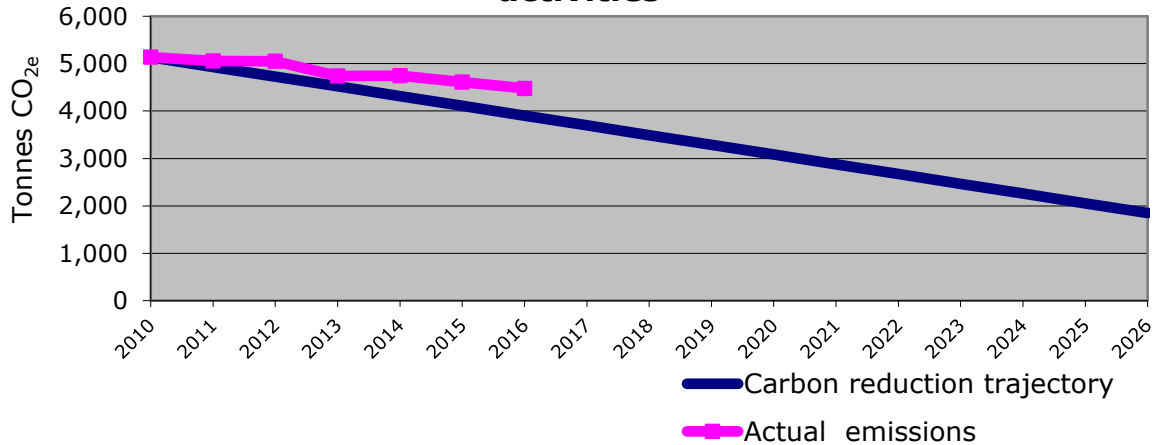
- Forest Heath decreased by 7.0% compared to 2015/16 (18.2% down on baseline)
- St Edmundsbury decreased 2.8% compared to 2015/16 (12.8% down on baseline)

We include emissions that arise from buildings and transportation. These include the leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure Trust and other operational buildings within each respective Council's footprint.

Greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂e) from FHDC activities



Greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂e) from SEBC activities



² Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). A universal unit of measurement used to indicate the global warming potential of a greenhouse gas, expressed in terms of the global warming potential of one unit of carbon dioxide. It is used to evaluate the releasing (or avoiding releasing) of different greenhouse gases against a common basis.

Key features noted during the year were as follows:

- Emissions from fleet vehicles used for refuse collection and gardening and grounds maintenance continued to rise due to increased commercial activity. In 2016/17 emissions rose by 4% on the previous year.
- Emissions from staff transport continued to fall, with emissions down by 5% compared to the previous year.
- Emissions from electricity consumption were down by 7% on the previous year.
- Forest Heath's emissions from gas consumption rose, due to a boiler and ventilation control issue at College Heath Road Offices, Mildenhall, which has now be rectified.
- Abbeycroft Leisure Trust properties in West Suffolk managed to reduce emissions by 8%.

NOTE: The gradual "greening" of grid electricity is a key component of the UK emissions reduction targets, and therefore also helping the Councils achieve our emissions reduction targets for 2025.

Emissions target and progress to date

As the councils' operations continue to develop and grow so do the challenges relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. Reduction of our carbon footprint will involve both continued improvement of building energy efficiency as well as reducing vehicle-related emissions.

Building energy use

Target: Reduce carbon emissions associated with building energy by 2025

Baseline year: 2010 (recalculated July 2016)

Forest Heath	1,717 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	3,720 tonnes CO ₂ e

2016/17 performance

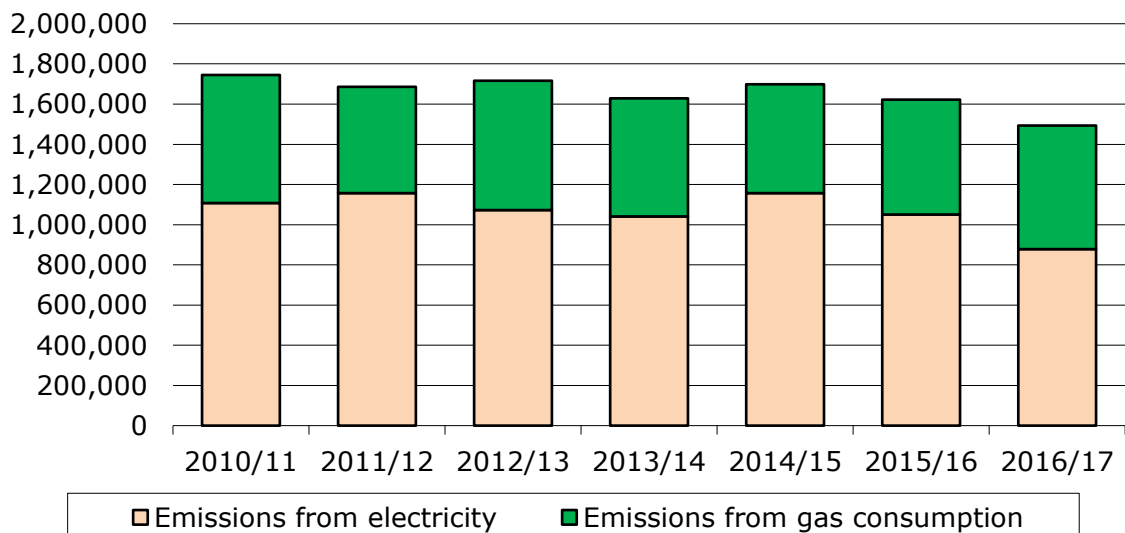
Forest Heath	1,493 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	3,063 tonnes CO ₂ e

Comments

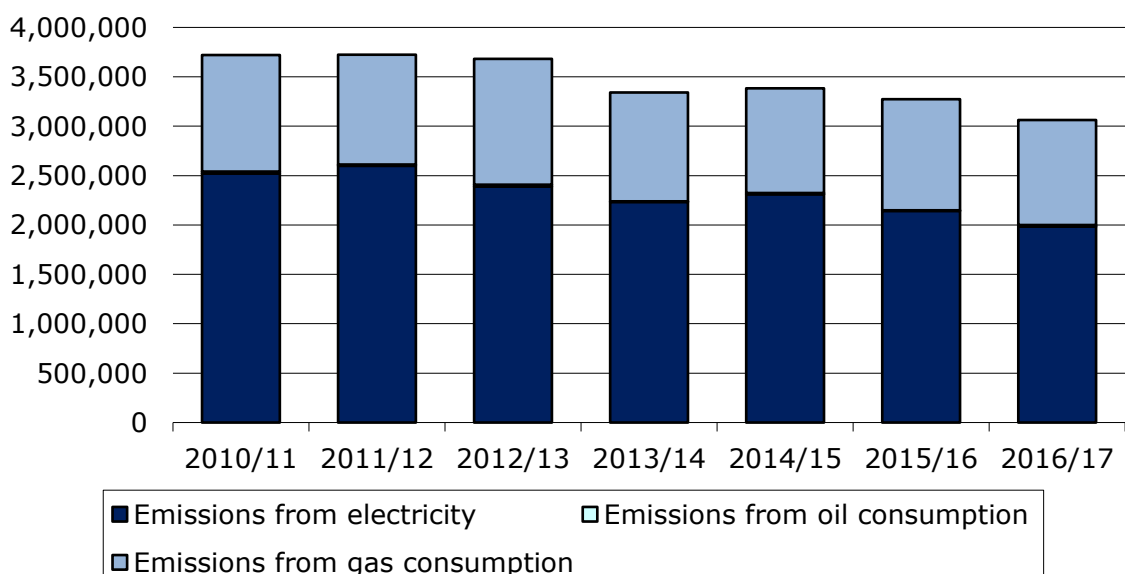
Significant energy efficiency improvement projects completed in 2016-17 included:

- Replacement roof glazing in the Haverhill Leisure Centre sports hall and new insulated roof covering to the sports hall at Newmarket Leisure Centre.
- New insulated roof coverings in commercial properties at Gregory Road (Mildenhall), Craven Way (Newmarket), Hollands Road (Haverhill) and Bunting Road (Bury).
- LED lighting upgrades at West Suffolk House, the Harvey Adam Centre in Brandon, Rous Road Car Park in Newmarket, the Ram Meadow and Abbey Gardens toilets.

FHDC- Breakdown of kgCO₂ emissions by fuel type



SEBC - Breakdown of kgCO₂ emissions by fuel type



Renewable Energy

Baseline year: 2012/13

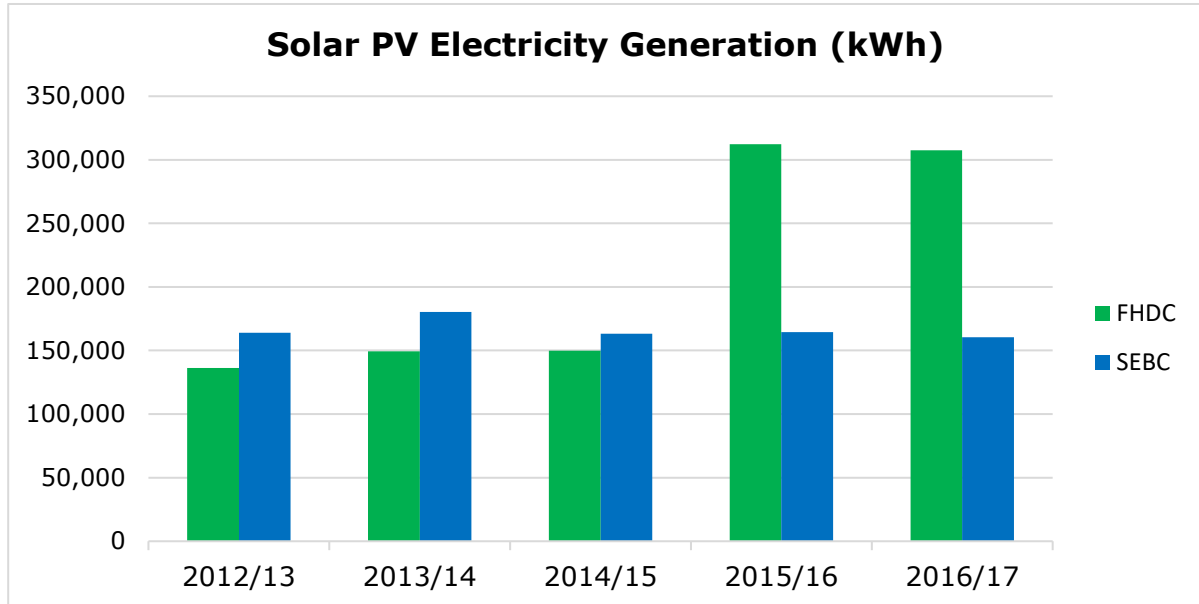
Total renewable energy generation	300,220 kWh
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2016/17 Performance

Total renewable energy generation	467,000 kWh
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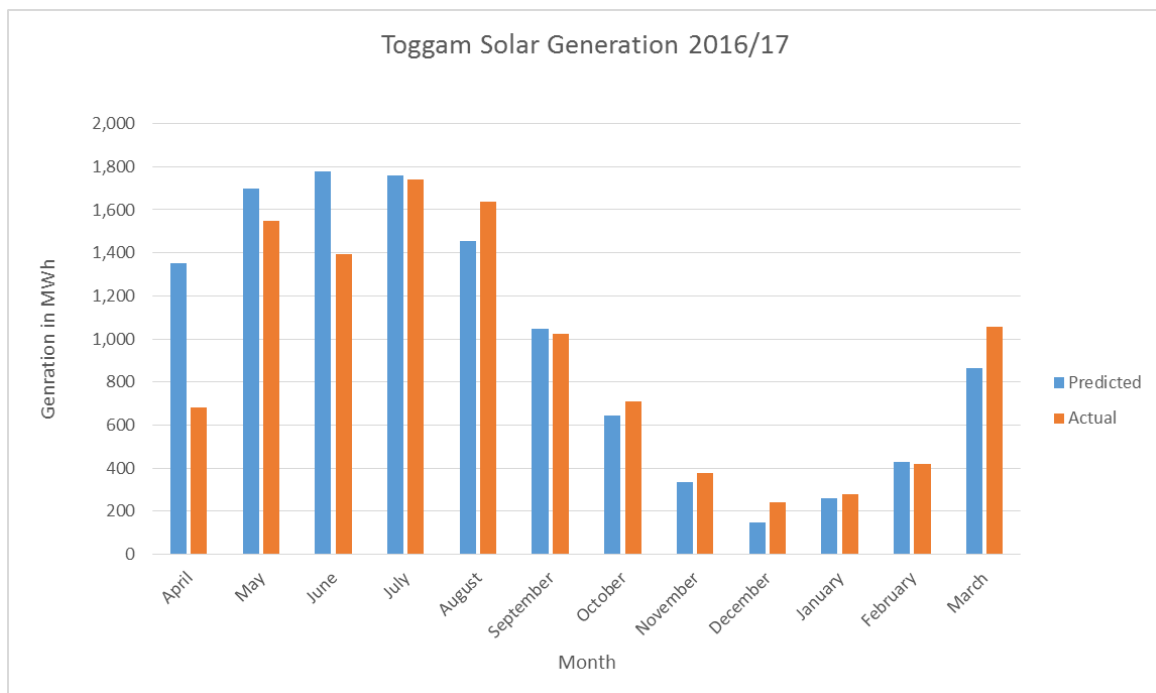
Renewable energy generation - buildings

The Councils continue to generate power from renewable energy sources on our own property – in 2016/17, 467,000 kWh were generated, enough to power 130 average homes. No new systems were installed in 2016/17 and generation has dropped slightly on the previous year due to weather variations and lower generation outputs in April to June in 2016.



Renewable energy generation – Commercial Generation

In July 2016, Forest Heath District Council purchased Toggam Solar Farm which, at 12.4MW (megawatts), is believed to be the largest local authority-owned solar farm in England. Over the last year, the solar farm has generated around 11,100MWh, enough electricity to power 3,200 homes and offset CO₂ emissions from 1,500 cars.



N.B. The solar farm was under separate ownership until the end of July 2016.

Significant reductions in the government support for renewable energy installations are making further investment on this scale less viable. However, we continue to explore the installation of renewable energy on existing and new property where justifiable based on our strategic objectives and investment principles.

Transport use

Target: Reduce the amount of fuel used by the Council's commercial fleet

Baseline Year: 2010

Commercial fleet fuel use in baseline year

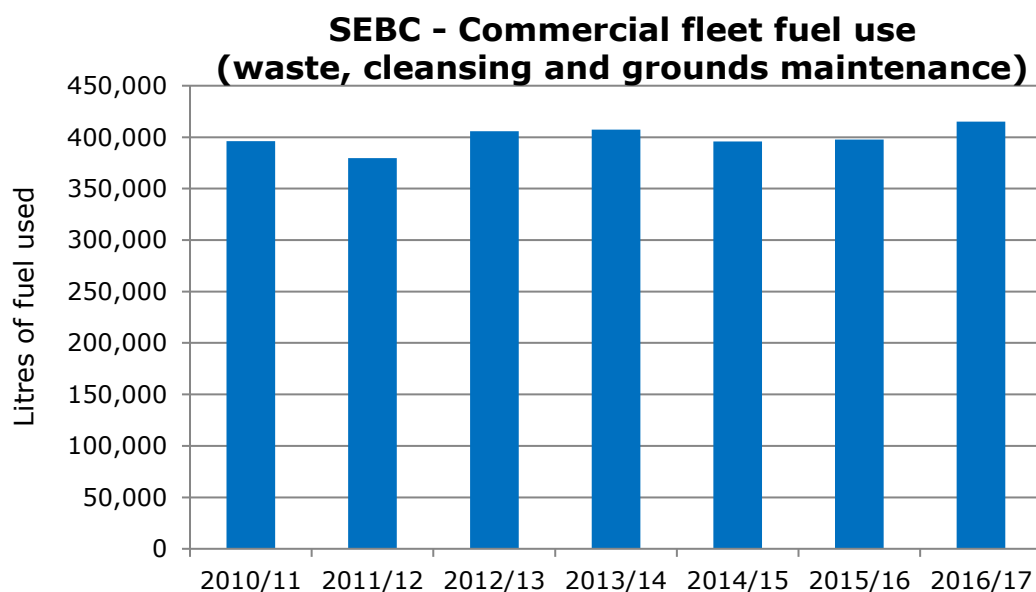
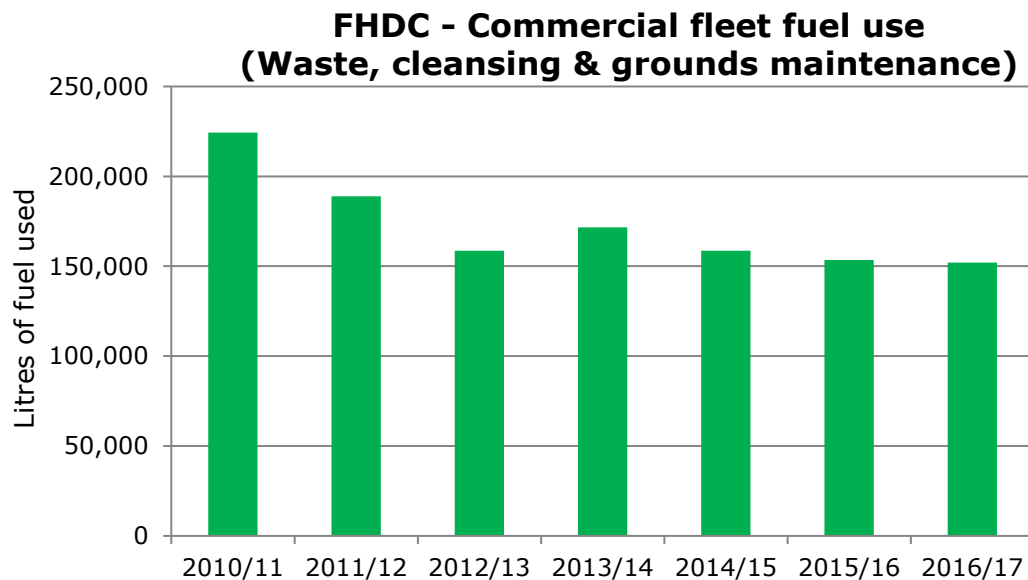
Forest Heath DC	224,260 litres
St Edmundsbury BC	396,182 litres
West Suffolk total	620,442 litres

2016/17 performance

Forest Heath DC	152,020 litres
St Edmundsbury BC	414,980 litres
West Suffolk total	567,000 litres

Comments

There has been an overall increase in CO₂ emissions from commercial fuel consumption and mileage for both Councils. In particular, the growth of landscaping services with School Academies and Haverbury Housing have had an effect as well as the activities required to support the commercial waste collection. Street cleansing and Car Parks were also seen to increase fuel consumption and activity. A review of routing and scheduling has been undertaken and the impacts of this work should be evident during 2017/18.



Transport use

Target: Reduce the total amount of Council passenger mileage by 10% each year over 2015 and 2016.

Baseline Year: 2014

Business vehicle passenger travel in baseline year:

West Suffolk total	677,073 miles
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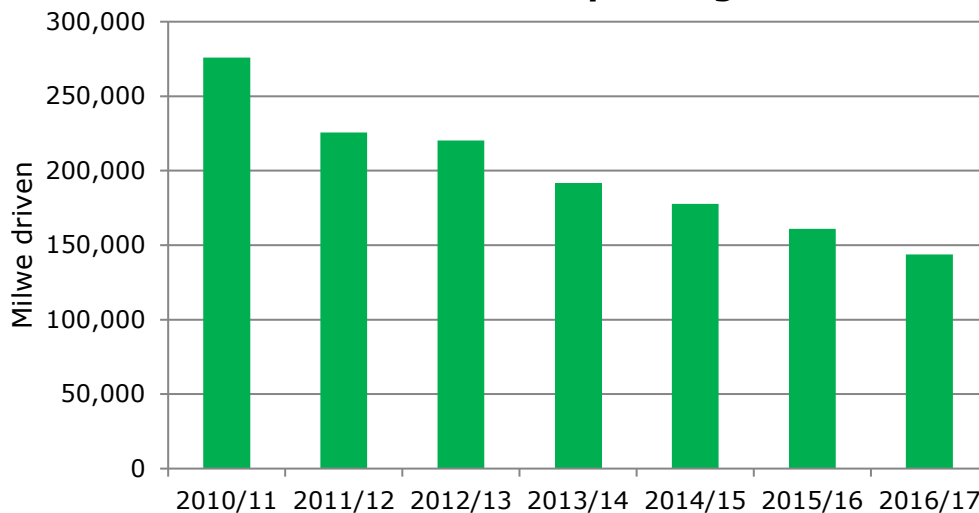
2016/17 performance

West Suffolk total	481,677 miles
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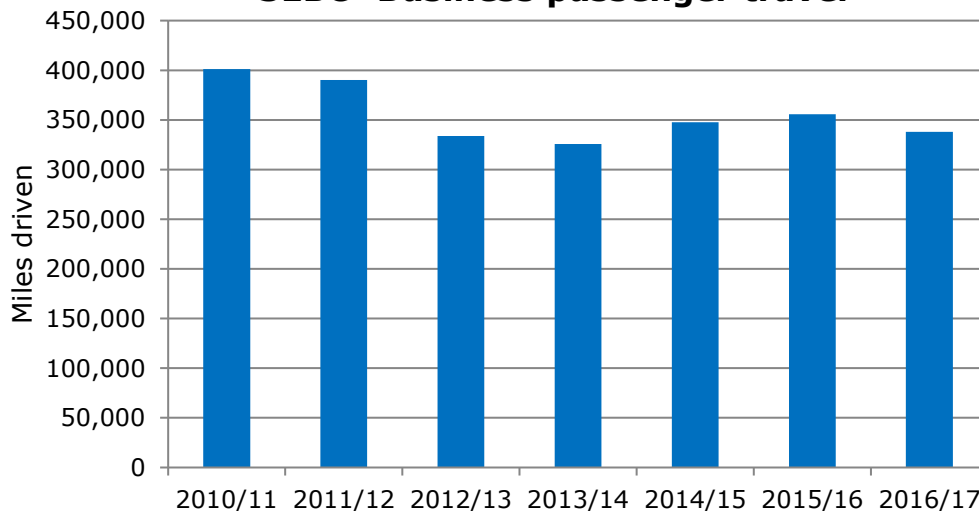
Comments

Business vehicle passenger travel includes staff mileage claimed through the expenses system, pool car use and other owned or leased vehicles. During 2016/17 staff mileage claimed through the expenses system continued to reduce to 435,067 miles from 447,124 miles in the previous year. Specific activities to encourage pool car use and promote biking to and within work have been undertaken along with increasing the number of tele-conference facilities in council buildings. Other factors may also have had an impact including changing staffing levels and rule for claiming business mileage.

FHDC - Business passenger travel



SEBC- Business passenger travel



Issues around transport-related air quality linked to health have been highly publicised in the national media. As a result, we have run initiatives to promote low emission vehicles and alternatives to the car. Improving our performance in this area, especially

in relation to addressing air quality issues and ensuring safe vehicles for staff transport, will continue to be a priority. During 2017/18 we will utilise a range of environmental messages to communicate with staff about the need to manage mileage and the emissions that arise from vehicle use. We plan to run activities with regards to the staff travel policy, pool car publicity and ease of access to other travel modes. Vehicle procurement is reviewed regularly with specifying lower emissions vehicles being considered in terms of fuel efficiency and emissions as well as the financial business case.

Our focus remains on ensuring that staff are able to carry out their work effectively and finding the correct ways and opportunities to address emissions and mileage.

Water use

Target: Reduce the amount of water used in Council activities.

Baseline year - 2010 (recalculated June 2014)

Water use in baseline year

Forest Heath	2,872 cubic metres
St Edmundsbury	20,955 cubic metres
ACL	51,076 cubic metres
West Suffolk total	74,903 cubic metres

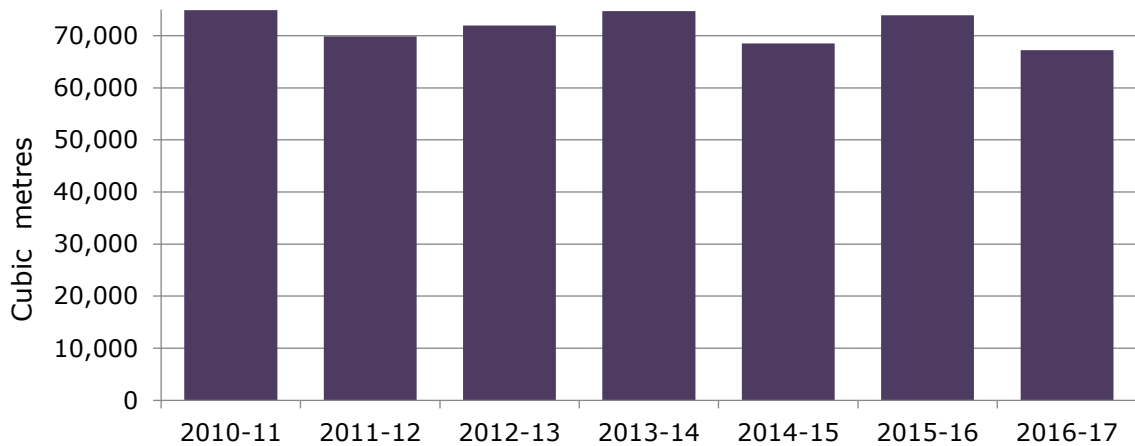
2016/17 performance

Forest Heath	3,579 cubic metres
St Edmundsbury	20,113 cubic metres
ACL	43,522 cubic metres
West Suffolk total	67,214 cubic metres

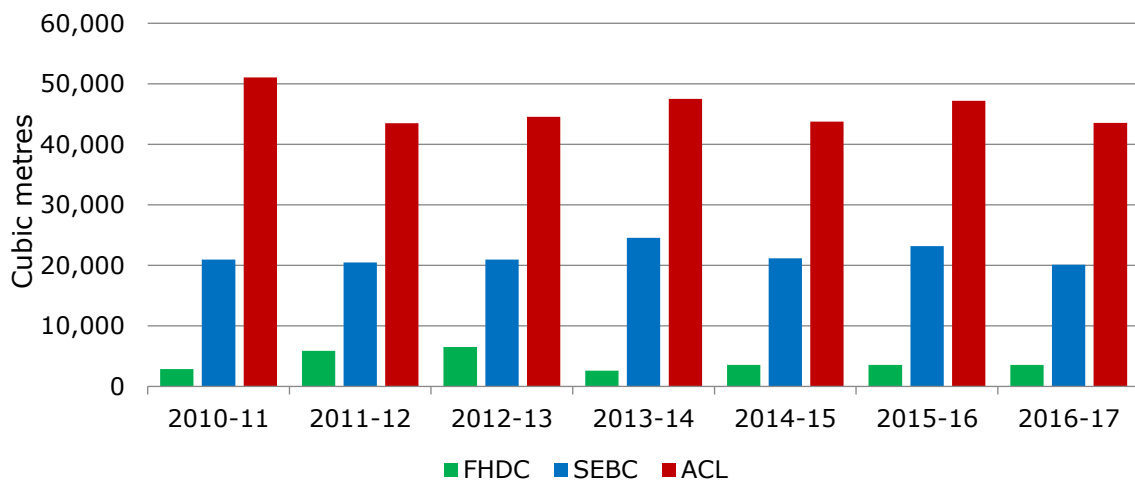
Comments

Leisure centre water use, which accounts for around two thirds of the total water use covered by this reporting, decreased by 7.8% along with an 11.3% drop across property operated by the councils. This reduction in Council water consumption reflects an increased focus on water consumption and the benefits of the installed automatic metering. The real time information allows us to target areas of high consumption and this work will continue into the future.

Total water use



Water use by organisation



Corporate Waste

Target: Recycle/Reuse/Recover 50% or more of each waste stream where safe to do so.

Baseline year - 2010

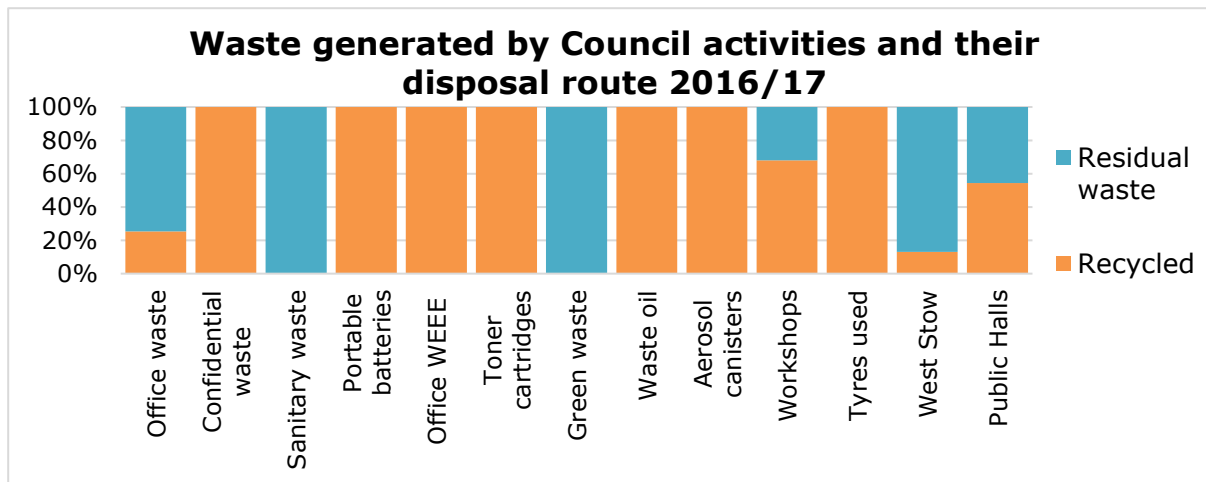
- 10 waste streams 50% recycled.
- 6 waste streams with potential to increase the recycling rate to 50% or above.
- 7 waste streams are subject to safe disposal only.

2016/17 performance

- 7 waste streams 100% recycled.
- 3 waste streams with potential to increase the recycling rate to 50% or above.
- All remaining waste streams are subject to safe disposal only.

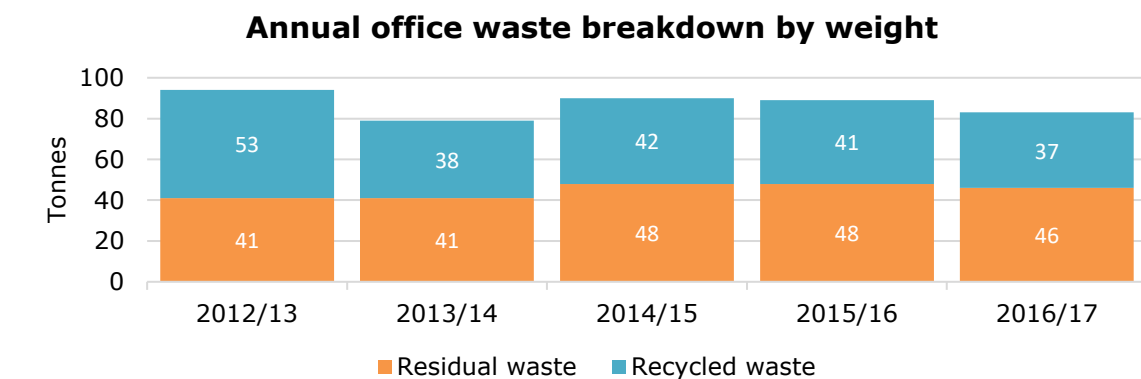
Comments

The Council continues to ensure legal compliance with respect to the Duty of Care for waste and works to implement new systems and facilities to increase recycling rates of waste generated by our activities. During 2016/17, we undertook a review to stimulate improvement in performance and reduce the monitoring and reporting burden. The following chart sets out current priority waste streams and recycling rates.



The chart on the following page shows the annual proportions of recycled and residual waste from office facilities. In 2016/17 the total amount of waste created was 83 tonnes - Residual waste was 46 tonnes and recycled waste was 37 tonnes - reduced by 5% and the proportion of the amount recycled actually reduced by 1% to 44.7% of the total waste created.

In 2017/18, we plan to continue the focus on improving office waste recycling.



Biodiversity

Target: Demonstrate habitat improvements at Green Flag Accredited Sites

Baseline:

Park performance against Green Flag criteria:

- Four Green Flag Parks

2016/17 performance

The following sites successfully retained Green Flag accreditation during the period:

- 1) Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds
- 2) East Town Park, Haverhill
- 3) Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds and
- 4) West Stow Country Park, West Stow.

In 2018/19, we are aspiring to achieve Green Flag status for Aspal Close Nature Reserve, Beck Row.

Ongoing Biodiversity and Natural Environment Programmes

West Suffolk Wildlife Audits - Suffolk Wildlife Trust were commissioned to undertake extended phase 1 habitat surveys of all sites owned or managed by both councils:

- Seventy sites were audited across West Suffolk.
- In Forest Heath's area, 7 sites scored high in biodiversity value. The audit has confirmed the presence of a number of endangered species at these sites.
- Many sites have been surveyed three times over a 20 year period.
- Two sites, East Town Park and Nowton Park, have progressed from medium to high biodiversity status.

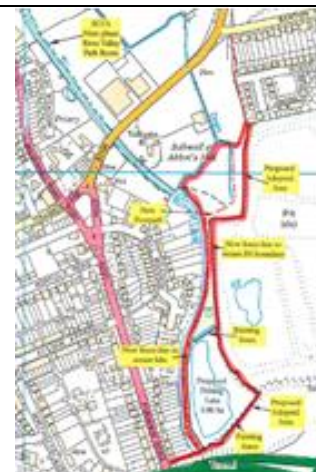
Breaking New Ground in the Brecks

The Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership (a partnership which includes both councils) has started delivering a range of exciting Heritage and Landscape Projects in the heart of the Brecks. The Partnership has worked with a wide range of partners and has delivered more than 37 projects across 4 areas of work.



River Lark Planned Path extension

British Sugar, St Edmundsbury Borough & Suffolk County Councils with the River Lark Partnership have, for some years, been looking to progress a project which would enable a public right of way to be installed alongside the river Lark. This has now been agreed and plans are in place to implement the project.



Environmental Compliance

Target: No incidents leading to formal action being taken by regulatory bodies

Target date: Ongoing

Baseline: 100% legal compliance for our operations (previously aligned with St Edmundsbury Borough Council's certification to ISO14001 which ceased in 2015)

2016/17 performance

The Councils continued to ensure effective compliance with environmental regulations.

Regular reviews are undertaken by key services to ensure that they are up-to-date with the environmental legislation that applies. No problems with environmental compliance have been reported during the period.

One regulatory inspection by the Environment Agency of the Western Way Depot, Bury St Edmunds, provided a recommendation to help improve the process for storage of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment that would help to increase the ability of fridges and freezers to be reused. This has been addressed.

In 2017/18, we intend to review our internal auditing processes to ensure ongoing compliance and identify improvements in practice as appropriate.