

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

**PERFORMANCE AND
AUDIT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

25 SEPTEMBER 2014

PAS14/050

Annual Corporate Environmental Statement – 2013-2014

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation

- 1.1 Set out in the report and supporting **Annex 1** is the Annual Environmental Statement covering the Council's environmental performance in 2013-2014. For the first time, the report covers both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury to reflect the shared way of working.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to **note** the work undertaken in order to improve Council environmental performance in West Suffolk.

Contact Details

Name: Nigel Roman
Title: Environment and Waste
Telephone: 01638 712679
E mail: nigelroman@forest-heath.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder

Nigel Roman
Environment and Waste

Lead Officer

Peter Gudde
Environment Manager
01284 757042
peter.gudde@westsuffolk.gov.uk

3. How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?

- 3.1 By delivering a shared service to improve environmental performance across West Suffolk, the Councils continue to fulfil both their statutory and policy responsibilities set out in the West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy, and support strategic vision *“Working together, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils will support communities to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk.”*

4. Progress made during 2013-2014

- 4.1 A summary of the progress made by the Councils is set out in **Annex 1**.
- 4.2 The Councils continued their work to improve environmental performance whilst responding to budgetary pressures and changing organisational arrangements as St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath District Councils continue integrating their services.
- 4.3 Areas where progress was made during 2013-2014 include:
- Energy use decreased across our property portfolio by 9% compared to our 2010 baseline
 - Business passenger mileage reduced by 22.5% compared to 2010
 - Our solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes continue to deliver around £115,000 of income/energy savings and 164 tonnes of CO₂ savings annually
 - We retained Green Flag status for four public parks
 - We achieved the Silver Motorvate award having reduced business mileage arising from our passenger and small vehicle fleet by 10% from a 2008 baseline.
- 4.4 In addition, our community-focused environmental work includes:
- Working in partnership with all Suffolk local authorities, we successfully applied for £5.5 million to run an energy efficiency programme for Suffolk residents over 2014-2015
 - We have helped 51 properties in West Suffolk secure external wall insulation at minimal cost to residents using Government eco-grants
 - We have continued to support local businesses with grant funding for energy efficiency measures. To date, for a grant investment of £46,000 this programme is estimated to be saving local businesses over £50,000 and 210 tonnes CO₂ annually.
- 4.5 As part of its commitment to improve energy efficiency and cut carbon emissions, Forest Heath District Council set itself a 30% reduction target by April 2014 against a 2008 baseline. The Council achieved a 40% reduction. This target has now been replaced by the longer term West Suffolk target set out in the Statement to bring the two councils in line with national carbon budgeting and to reflect the changing nature of the property portfolio.
- 4.6 We faced challenges during the year which caused our performance to fall below our targets. In particular, water use has dropped only by 2% since 2010. Water use went up from the previous year by 1,285 cubic metres (2%) for the reasons set out in the section of this report dealing with water use. These

include increased business at public venues and an unexpected water leak at one of the depots.

5. Other options considered

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Community Impact

6.1 **Crime and Disorder Impact** (*including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998*)

6.1.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

6.2 **Diversity and Equality Impact** (*including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment*)

6.2.1 There are no human rights or diversity implications from the Air Quality Strategy.

6.3 **Sustainability Impact** (*including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment*)

6.3.1 This work ensures that the Council meets its actions to Support the Joint West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy, adopted by both councils in December 2013.

6.4 **Other Impact** (*any other impacts affecting this report*)

6.4.1 Implementing this work has a positive impact on the community as a whole, making West Suffolk an attractive place to live and work.

7. **Consultation** (*what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?*)

7.1 The Environmental Statement is published annually as part of formal performance reporting to the public. As such, no consultation is necessary.

8. **Financial and resource implications** (*including asset management implications*)

8.1 There are ongoing resource implications to deliver this work. These continue to be reviewed and considered in the light of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8.2 Investment in energy and water efficiency and cutting waste is now standard practice across all business sectors and also plays a part in demonstrating a wider corporate social responsibility.

9. **Risk/Opportunity Assessment** (*potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives*)

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
Statutory Responsibilities	Medium	Delivering the statutory responsibilities will help reduce the inherent level of risk.	Low
Reputational	Medium m	The Councils' work will help achieve a credible pathway to improving environmental performance.	Low
Financial	Low	Cost-benefit of key work will continue to be reviewed and adjusted.	Low

10. Legal and policy implications

- 10.1 By delivering this work, the Councils are fulfilling both their statutory responsibilities and strategic priority for *"resilient families and communities that are healthy and active with improved wellbeing, physical and mental health"*.

11. Wards affected

- 11.1 All

12. Background papers

- 12.1 CAB13/123 Report to Cabinet dated 26 November 2013 – Recommendations to adopt the proposed West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy.

13. Documents attached

- 13.1 Annex 1 – West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2013-2014.



West Suffolk

Environmental Statement 2013-14

Our commitment to Sustainability

Following the creation of a joint Sustainability Strategy in 2013, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council are working together to manage the effects that their activities have on the natural environment. A range of priority themes have been identified which the Councils wish to influence through their services at a local level and an action plan has been put in place to work towards achieving this.

The issues identified include :-

- Creating sustainable economic growth
- Energy conservation and renewable energy
- Affordable warmth
- Health and well-being
- Housing
- Natural and heritage capital
- The built environment
- Travel
- Water resources
- Procurement
- Waste.

The Joint Sustainability Strategy which incorporates the vision and objectives for the Councils is available via www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/susatinability

Set out in the following pages is a snapshot of West Suffolk's performance against these targets during 2013-14. This forms part of the Management Review of performance against the ISO14001 certification held by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Given the scope of this report, there is a significant amount of work which contributes to improving the environment carried out by both Councils directly and with their partners which is not covered in this statement.

Our environmental performance in 2013-14

The Councils continued their work to improve environmental performance whilst responding to budgetary pressures and changing organisational arrangements as St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath District Councils continue integrating their services.

Areas where progress was made during 2013-14 include:

- Energy use decreased across our property portfolio by 9% compared to our 2010 baseline
- Business passenger car travel reduced by 24% compared to 2010
- Our solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes continue to deliver around £115,000 of income/energy savings and 164 tonnes of CO₂ savings annually
- We retained Green Flag status for four public parks
- We achieved the Silver Motorvate award having reduced business mileage arising from our passenger and small vehicle fleet by 10% from a 2008 baseline.

In addition, our community-focused environmental work includes:

- Working in partnership with all Suffolk local authorities, we successfully applied for £5.5 million to run an energy efficiency programme for Suffolk residents over 2014-15
- We have helped 51 properties in West Suffolk secure external wall insulation at minimal cost to residents using Government eco-grants
- We have continued to support local businesses with grant funding for energy efficiency measures. To date, for a grant investment of £46,000 this programme is estimated to be saving local businesses over £50,000 and 210 tonnes CO₂ annually.

We faced challenges during the year which caused our performance to fall below our targets. In particular, water use has dropped only by 2% since 2010. Water use went up from the previous year by 1,285 cubic metres (2%) for the reasons set out in the section of this report dealing with water use.

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

Greenhouse gas emissions arising from Council activities

Target

Reduce greenhouse gas (CO₂e)¹ emissions by 60%

Target date: 2025

Baseline year: 2010

Baseline (2010 recalculated June 2014):

Forest Heath	2,245 tonnes CO ₂ e ²
St Edmundsbury	4,591 tonnes CO ₂ e

The footprint comprises three components:

- Emissions from building heating (e.g. by gas or oil), business passenger car travel and any so-called "fugitive" emissions arising from sources other than from controlled combustion.
- Emissions arising from purchased electricity use.
- Business mileage by public transport and the embedded emissions associated with water use in public buildings.

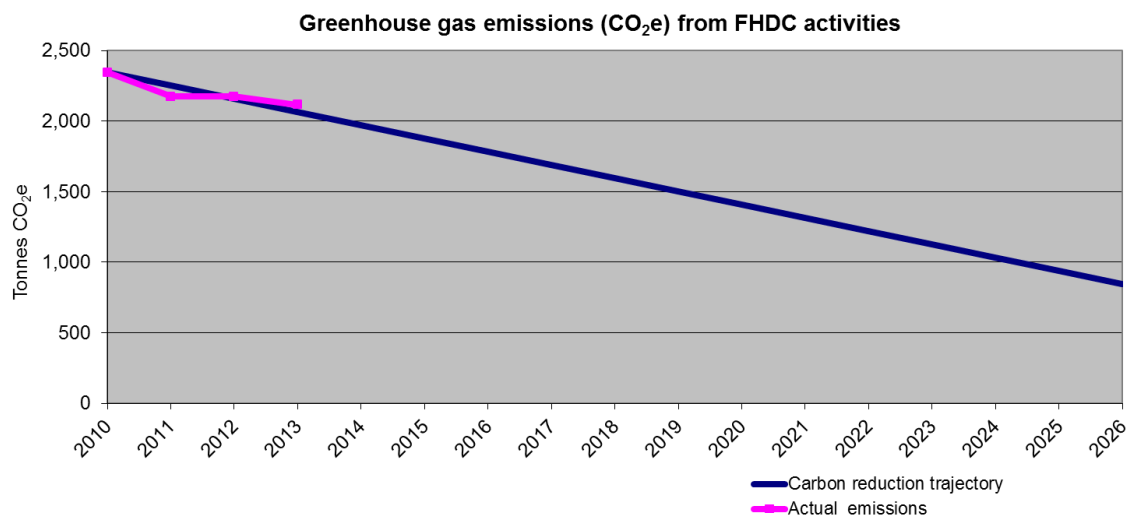
In practice, this target applies to energy, transport and water use across both Councils.

We include emissions associated with the leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure Trust and Anglia Community Leisure Trust (except the Dome, Mildenhall³) within the respective Council's footprint. This is because we own the buildings and have a direct commissioning relationship with the Trusts.

Under government reporting rules, each Council publishes its own Greenhouse Gas Inventories annually. These are available on the Councils' websites.

Forest Heath District Council set itself a 30% reduction target by April 2014 against a 2008 baseline. The Council achieved a 40% reduction. This target has now been replaced by the longer term West Suffolk target set out above.

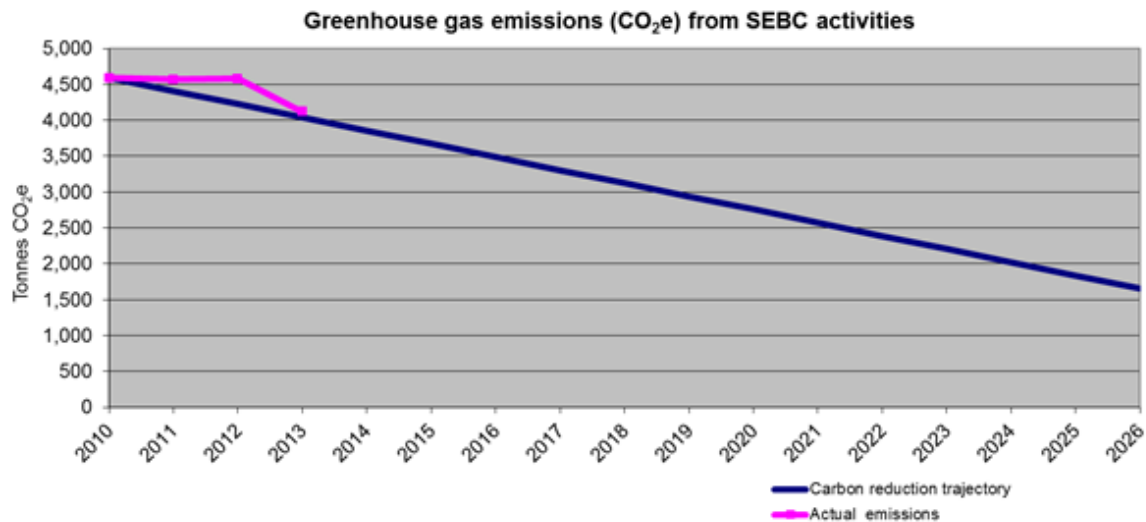
2013-14 performance



¹ Local authority Greenhouse Gas Inventories are published and reported annually to the Department of Energy and Climate Change following the approved method set out in Defra publication "Guidance on how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions" published in September 2013. It is revised the following year where it is necessary as result of the latest available billing and metering information and changes to the ownership and use of buildings.

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.

³ The Dome is owned by the Mildenhall Academy School



CO₂ emissions are generally down across both Councils with St Edmundsbury showing a 10% reduction and Forest Heath a 3% reduction compared to the previous year.

A more detailed explanation is given in the following sections.

DRAFT

Building energy use

Target:

Reduce carbon emissions associated with building energy

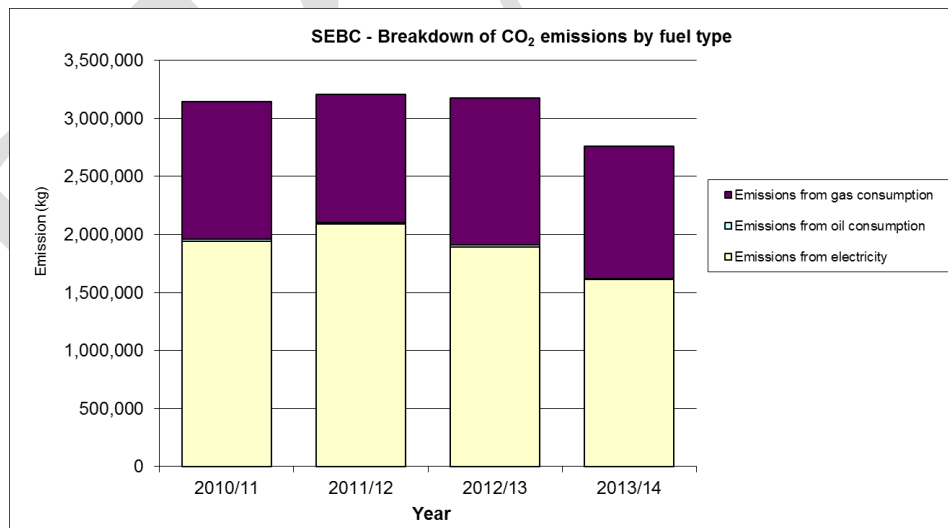
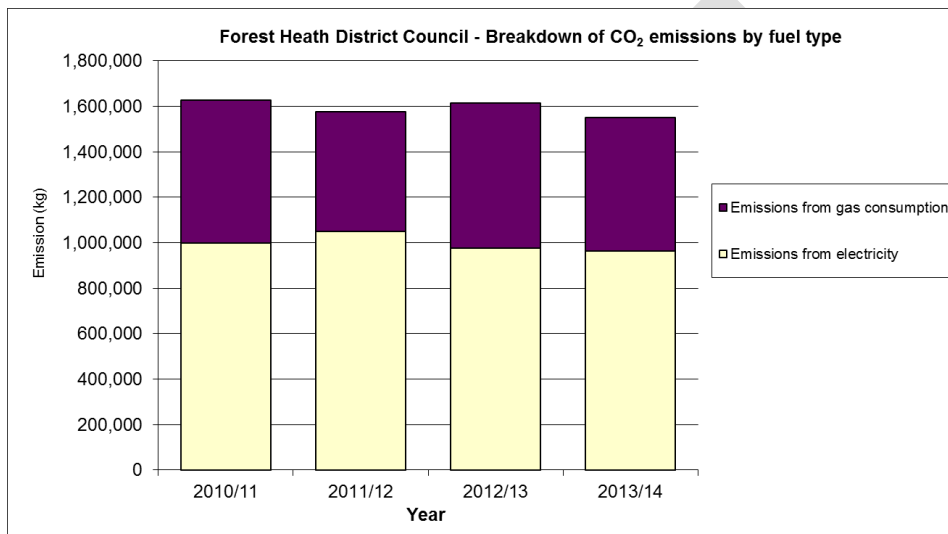
Target date: 2025

Baseline year: 2010 (recalculated June 2014)

Forest Heath
St Edmundsbury

1,639 tonnes CO₂e⁴
3,143 tonnes CO₂e

2013-14 performance



2013-14 performance

Compared to 2012-13, gas consumption reduced by 9% across the St Edmundsbury/Abbeycroft property portfolios while Forest Heath/ACL showed an 8% reduction. Electricity use reduced by 15% across St Edmundsbury/Abbeycroft while a 1% saving was seen within FHDC/ACL.

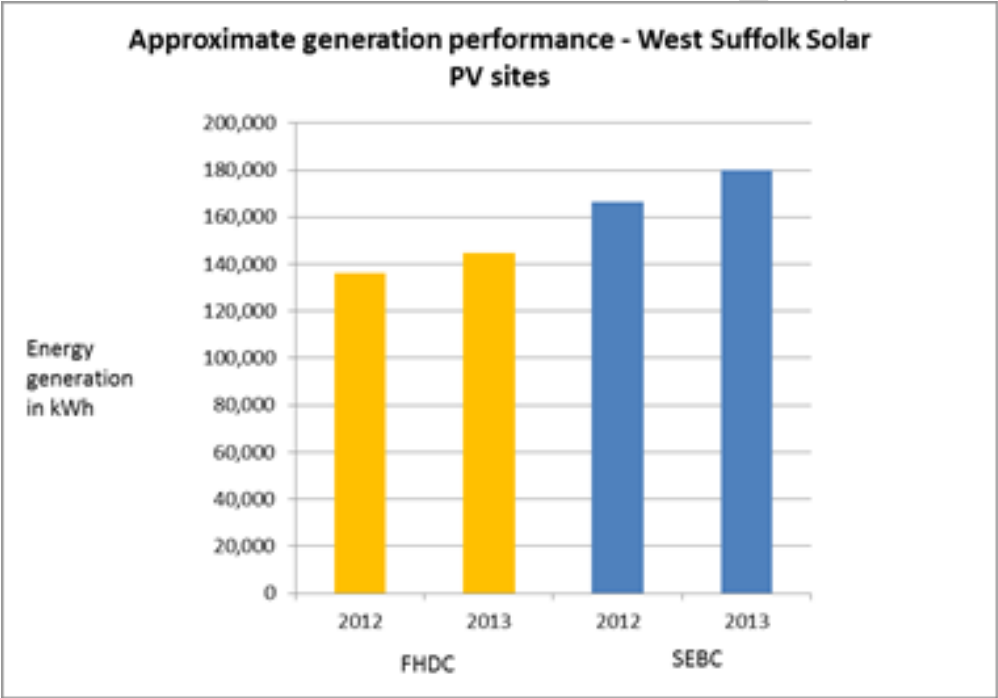
⁴ Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). A universal unit of measurement used to indicate the global warming potential of a greenhouse gas, expressed in terms of the global warming potential of one unit of carbon dioxide. It is used to evaluate the releasing (or avoiding releasing) of different greenhouse gases against a common basis.

Investment has been made in energy efficiency measures, such as insulation at the Bury St Edmunds Depot, replacing lighting at Haverhill Offices and West Stow Country Park. The annual spend on energy for the two councils in 2013-14 was £344,000 compared to £419,500 in the previous year.

The Councils are working to make more efficient use of existing buildings, particularly office accommodation, by renting out space to other organisations. The full benefit of this will start to be realised during 2014-15.

Work is planned for 2014-15 to improve energy efficiency at the Guineas Car park, Newmarket.

Renewable energy generation



In 2011, the Councils invested in solar panels to generate electricity. In 2013, the systems generated 325,000 kWh of electricity. This resulted in approximately 164 tonnes of CO₂ savings and financial benefit to the Councils of £115,000 resulting from energy savings and income from the Feed-in Tariff.

Feasibility studies are underway to install solar photovoltaics and biomass heating in several buildings across the West Suffolk portfolio.

Transport use

Target:

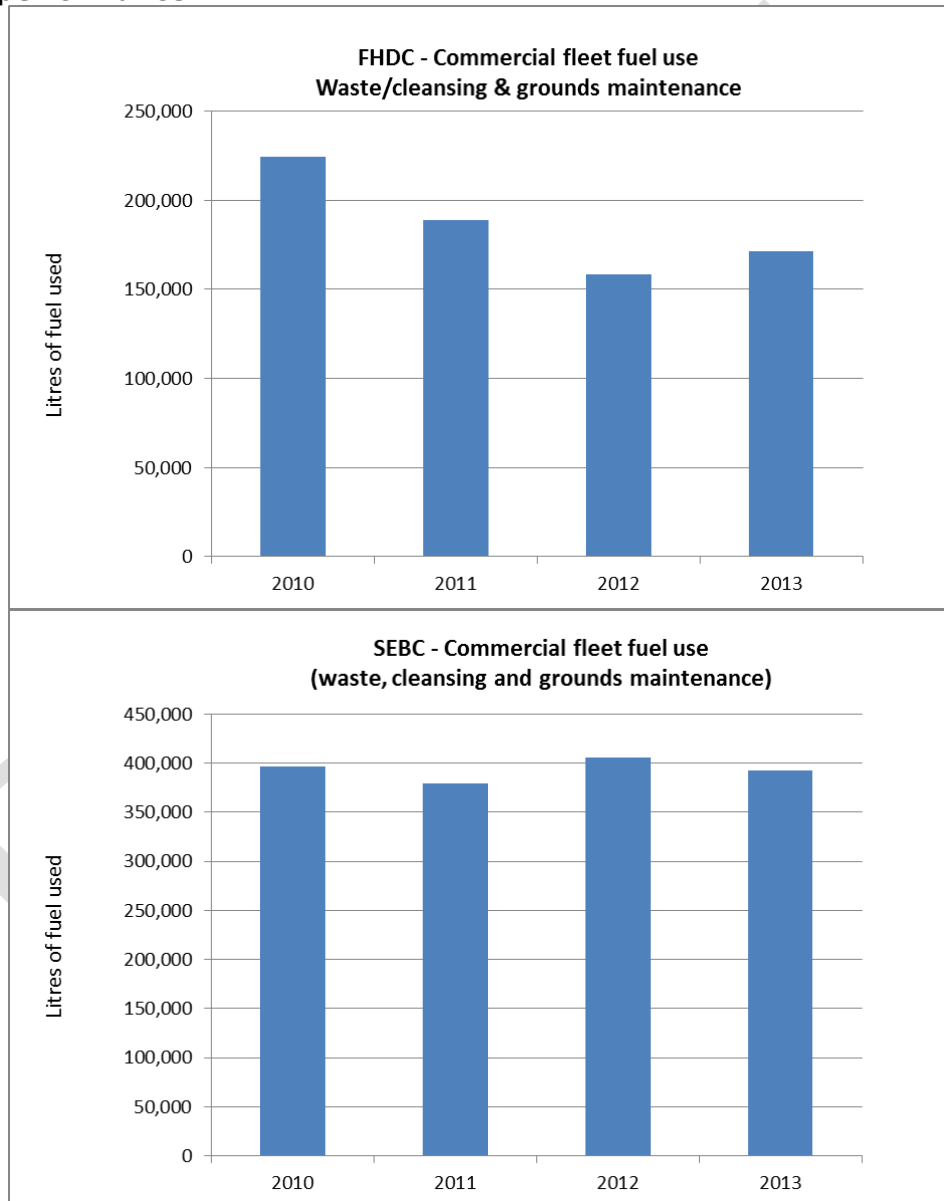
Reduce the amount of fuel used by the Council's commercial fleet

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

2013-14 performance



Our combined West Suffolk commercial fleet, which provides refuse collection, cleansing and grounds maintenance services, used the same amount of fuel in 2013 compared with the previous year. Compared to the 2010 baseline, fleet fuel use has decreased by 9%. Much of this has been achieved through better route management and investment in more fuel-efficient vehicles and is despite an increase in demand as the services continue to grow in response to more homes being built in the area.

Target:

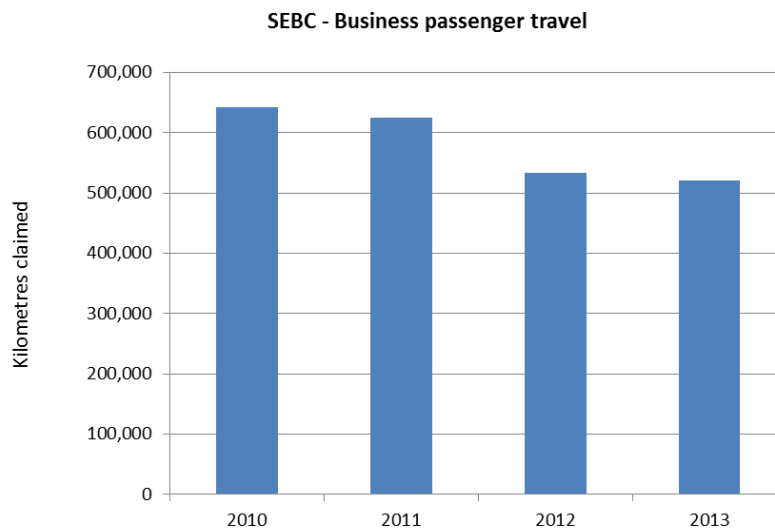
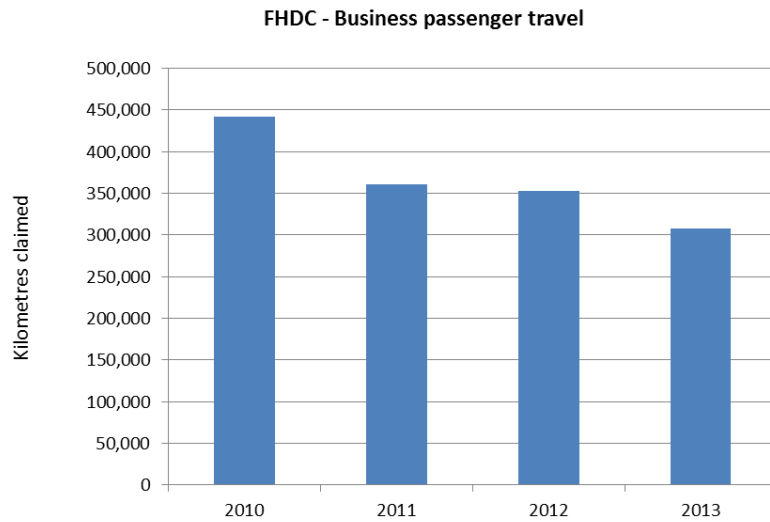
Reduce the total amount of Council passenger travel (kilometres) driven.

Baseline Year: 2010

Business passenger travel in baseline year:

Forest Heath	441,368 kilometres
St Edmundsbury	641,948 kilometres
West Suffolk total	1,083,316 kilometres

2013-14 performance



Claimed business passenger car travel for West Suffolk has reduced by 24% since 2010, dropping to 828,020km in 2013.

Factors likely to have led to the reduction include reduced staff numbers, sharing of services across the West Suffolk area and continued implementation of the staff business travel reduction initiatives.

Water use

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

Baseline year - 2010 (recalculated June 2014)

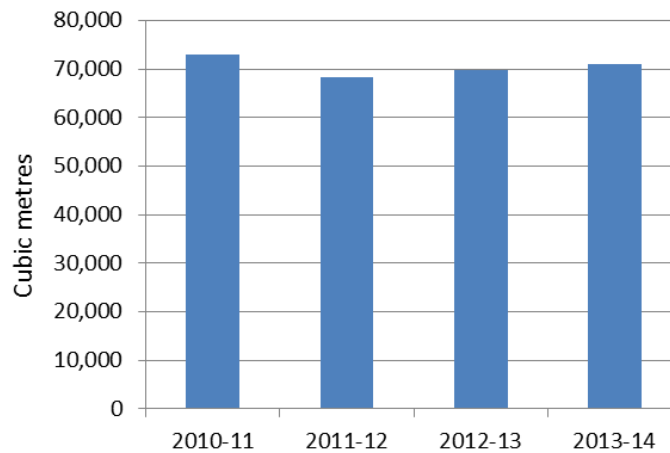
Water use in baseline year

Forest Heath	2,872 cubic metres
St Edmundsbury	18,929 cubic metres
Abbeycroft Leisure Trust	30,057 cubic metres
Anglia Community Leisure	21,019 cubic metres
West Suffolk total	72,877 cubic metres

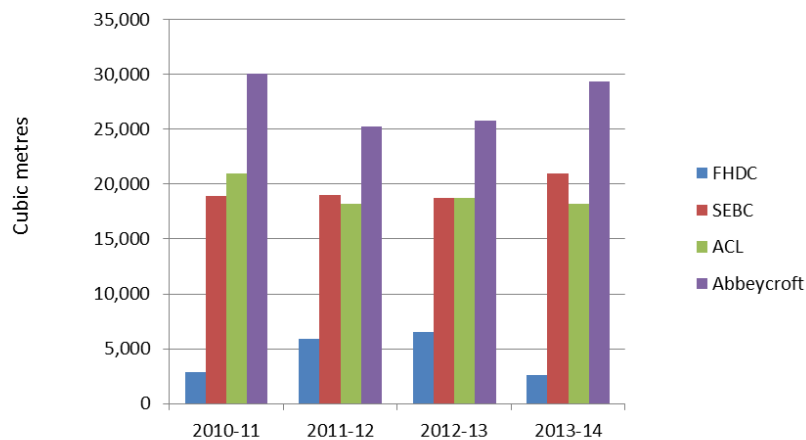
The leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure Trust and Anglia Communities Leisure Trust are included in the baseline to accord with the Councils' Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The leisure centres account for around 70% of total water use.

2013-14 performance

Total water use



Water use by organisation



Water use has dropped only by 2% since 2010 to 71,071 cubic metres. Water use went up from the previous year by 1,285 cubic metres (2%). Water use has increased significantly at Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds Depot and the Apex. The increases are partly the result of increased business activity at

public venues. A recurrent leak at Homefield Road Depot, Haverhill, was diagnosed and addressed during the year.

Work planned during 2014-15 includes installing a separate borehole water supply at Haverhill Depot and moving the three depots to trade effluent tariffs which should lead to a financial saving.

DRAFT

Biodiversity

Headline target: Maintain and increase Green Flag sites

Headline target date: April 2014

Baseline: Four Green Flag parks

2013-14 performance

The following sites successfully achieved Green Flag re-accreditation in 2013/14:

- Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds
- East Town Park, Haverhill
- Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds
- West Stow Country Park, West Stow, Bury St Edmunds.

Target: Demonstrate habitat improvements at Green Flag Accredited Sites

Nowton Park

Hay Cutting of the meadows has helped maintain the species rich grassland on the site and the cost of maintenance has been recouped through the sale of the hay crop (Opening photo - Page 1).

East Town Park, Haverhill

The park is important for both reptiles and amphibians, rangers and volunteers have worked together to cut and rake the meadows and create basking areas for the reptiles.



East Town Park, Haverhill



Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds

Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds

The north bank of the River Lark that runs through the Gardens has been cleared of invasive Sycamore and Ash saplings to allow more light through to the ground this has opened up the area and gives a clearer view of the Abbots Bridge. New wild flowers are to be introduced to take advantage of the higher light levels.

Target: Demonstrate habitat improvements in two principal towns in West Suffolk

Brandon - Artemisia Site

This is small area of remnant heathland that is now surrounded by Industrial Units. It contains a nationally rare plant *Artemisia campestris* (Field Southernwood).

The grassland has been cut in Spring to encourage the plant to flower and maintain its population.



Information board, Brandon



Great Churchyard, Bury St Edmunds

Bury St Edmunds – The Great Churchyard

The tombs and headstones are protected in this closed churchyard and the grassland requires special management to ensure that both headstones and wildlife are considered. A new sward of wildflowers were introduced in early Spring to improve the floristic diversity.

Target: Demonstrate habitat improvements at one rural location in West Suffolk

Maidcross Hill, Lakenheath

This Heathland Site next to the airbase at Lakenheath used to be part of the great warren area where sand dunes shifted across the landscape as subsistence farming and rabbit production were the dominant land use. Working with landowners and Natural England, designated areas have been profiled to mimic the sand dune landscape that is favoured by a selection of rare Breckland plants.



Maidcross Hill, Lakenheath

Environmental Compliance

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

Target date: Ongoing

Baseline: 100% legal compliance with operations according with the ISO14001 certification

2013-14 performance

The Councils continued to ensure effective compliance with environmental regulations.

In addition to standard service management practice, regular checks and audits are carried out to verify compliance as part of the Environmental Management System supporting the ISO14001 certification held by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

This approach now covers both councils with activities targeted at those operations which could pose potentially significant risks to the environment performance of the Councils in the absence of appropriate controls. These activities include:

- management of the Council's wastes
- land, air and water pollution prevention
- Fuel and chemical storage.

Changes to environmental policy, objectives, targets and the Environmental Management System (EMS)

A West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy was adopted by both Councils in December 2013 following stakeholder consultation. This has replaced three strategies as well as St Edmundsbury's Environmental Policy.

Shared objectives are set out within the Strategy on which environmental management targets have, or will, be based.

An Environmental Management Group, comprising officers from key services across the two Councils, has been operating for over a year. The Group reports to a director champion.

In August 2013, St Edmundsbury Borough Council achieved re-certification to the ISO14001 standard. This will run until the Summer of 2015 by which time the Councils will have decided on the future of the formal accreditation for West Suffolk as a whole.

During the year, the West Suffolk Councils developed a shared Procurement policy and supporting purchaser guidance. Environmental performance of the supply chain is formally embedded within the Strategy which is expected to be adopted during Summer 2015. As a result, a decision has been made to suspend the environmental target relating to Procurement pending review.

The environmental target for in-house waste ran out in April 2013 with the target being met with the exception of one waste stream of the seventeen recorded. A decision to re-set the target will be taken during 2014-15. In the meantime, we will continue work to push all waste streams up the Hierarchy, as far as is practicable and economically feasible.

Compliance with legal and other standards

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. Following internal and external audits, several areas for improvement in compliance have been identified. These include:

- Putting in place a Pollution Response Plan at West Stow Visitor Centre (principal hazard - heating oil storage)

- Acid battery storage container at Homefield Road damaged allowing water to collect around waste batteries (principal hazard – battery corrosion in contact with rainwater).

Improvement Opportunities

During 2013-14, attention was focussed on energy use. Three improvement areas were identified:

- Investment in energy efficiency – Examples include lighting upgrades in Haverhill Offices and West Stow Visitor Centre, boiler improvements and building insulation as part of refurbishing Bury St Edmunds Depot
- Behavioural change – this work is pending implementation of the new financial system which will be used for budget/energy spend reporting to key service managers
- Investment in renewable energy – preparatory work has been undertaken this year to develop the next generation of renewable energy schemes.

Internal audits of council activities

Six audits were scheduled for 2013-14, with five completed during the year. The sixth was completed in May 2014. Also, two audits were undertaken of Forest Heath DC operations in December 2013 looking at environmental compliance and energy management. All audit findings were reported to the appropriate Council management for action.

External audits

In August 2013, St Edmundsbury Borough Council achieved re-certification to the ISO14001 standard. This will run until the Summer of 2015.

During the year, the Councils' fleet management underwent independent audit by the national best practice programme, Motorvate. Based on the audit, the fleet management for West Suffolk achieved Motorvate's Silver certification status (10% CO₂ reduction) moving from bronze (5% CO₂ reduction).

Areas where improvement was identified

There were no outstanding non-conformances or corrective actions arising from internal audits. Following external ISO14001 audit, areas for improvement were identified. At the time of writing, these await sign-off by the external auditor at their next visit in July 2014.

Changes to business & legislation relating to aspects

Key changes during the year included:

- Consolidation of the new shared services approach
- Changes to key legislation – these changes are regularly communicated to key staff across the Councils
- The impact of the Government's financial settlement on the Council budget.

Following the last external re-certification, the auditor was concerned that there was insufficient consideration of the root cause when problems which affect our environmental performance. This will now form part of the investigation following non-conformances being identified.

Communication from external parties

No formal communications relating to adverse environmental performance were reported to the Council during the year.