

West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2017/18



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 activities undertaken to manage and reduce the environmental impacts of our operations during the year ending 31st March 2018.

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 - www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/environment.

The report is structured by theme with highlights set out below. For ease, links to the key sections are made in the summary.

Our environmental performance in 2017/18

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

- Total CO₂ emissions, compared to our 2010 baseline, are down by 26.7% for Forest Heath and 14.49% in St Edmundsbury with emissions for both Councils reduced since 2016/17 – [see section 1](#)
- CO₂ emissions associated with the Councils grid electricity consumption has decreased by 11% compared to 2016/17. This has been assisted by the “greening” or decarbonisation of the electrical grid.
- These reductions have managed to override increased gas energy consumption from the Council’s main buildings – [see section 2](#).
- Our solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes continue to generally deliver in line with projections and the Councils continue exploring the benefits that other renewable energy technologies may bring, such as renewable heat – [see section 3](#).
- The Toggam Solar Farm ([see section 3](#)) has generated 11,687MWh, slightly above the predicted level. This equates to around the demand from 3,300 homes and offset the Carbon Dioxide emissions from 1,500 cars.
- CO₂ emissions from commercial fleet transport use has increased by 2%, we believe this is due to the increased demand on services and commercial service provision – [see section 4](#).
- During 2017/18, staff mileage claimed through the expenses system reduced by 3% from 435,067 miles to 420,780 miles – [see section 5](#).
- Water use across the Councils and the leisure centres managed by Abbeycroft Leisure decreased by 9% compared to 2016/17 – [see section 6](#).
- A number of waste initiatives were launched in 2017/18 to improve office waste recycling performance based on audits – [see section 7](#).

- We retained Green Flag status for four of our public parks and have improved the biodiversity status of a number of green spaces – [see section 8](#).

The Council continues to deliver improved environmental performance across a range of impact areas. Delivery is facilitated by communications between teams and via the Environmental Management group. Priority areas for 2018/19 will be building gas consumption, office and park waste streams and establishing our strategy and action plan to continue to address the impacts of Council vehicle and transportation.

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) emissions¹ 35%

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

2017/18 performance

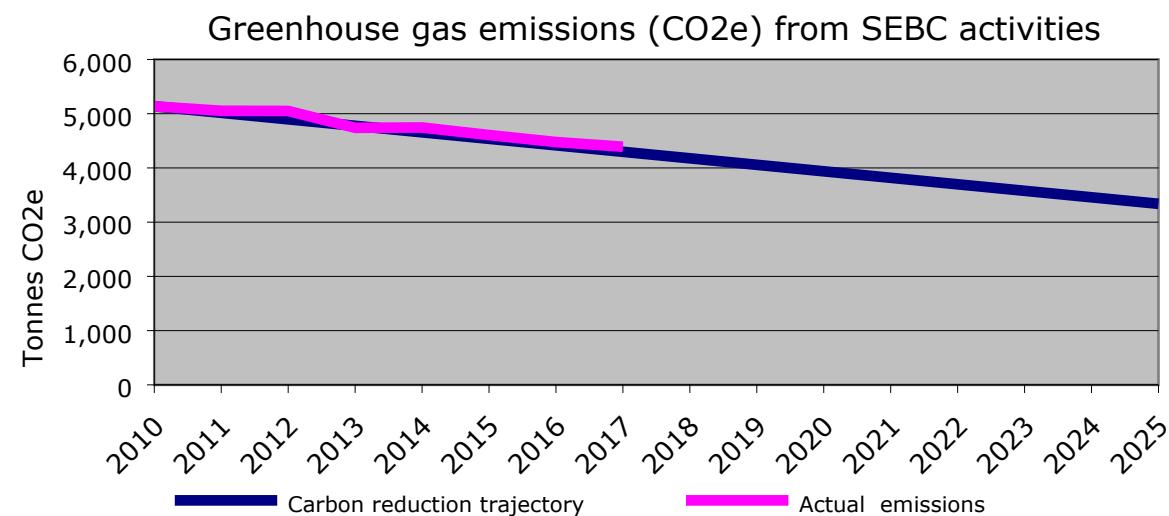
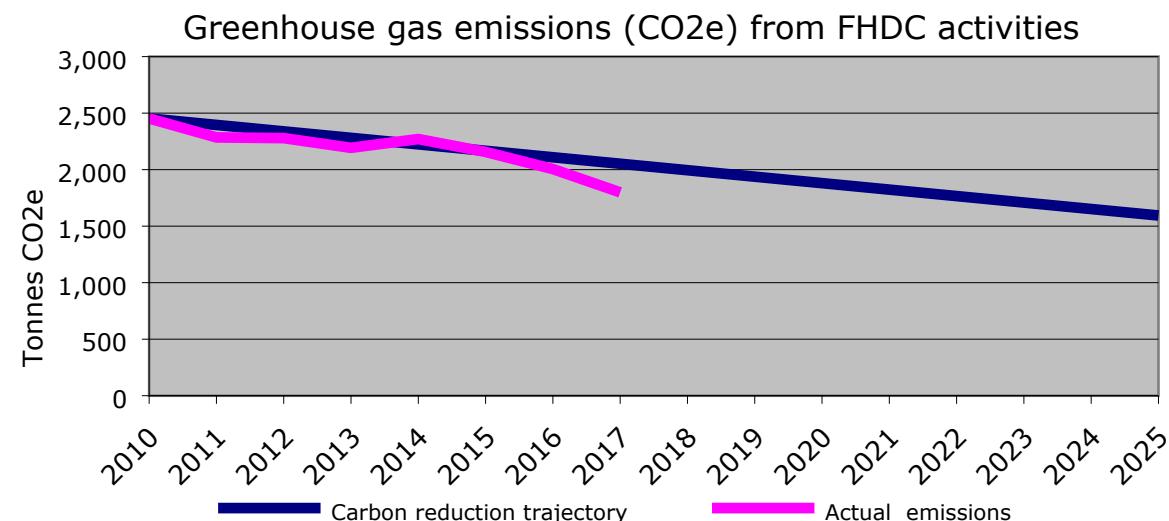
Forest Heath	1,799 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	4,391 tonnes CO ₂ e

Comment

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

- Forest Heath decreased by 10.3% compared to 2016/17 (26.7% down on baseline)
- St Edmundsbury decreased 1.9% compared to 2016/17 (14.49% down on baseline)

We include emissions that arise from buildings and transportation. These include the leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure and other operational buildings. The lower reduction in SEBC emissions is attributable to an increase in emissions from gas consumption (Council and Abbeycroft Leisure) and a small increase in vehicle related emissions.



¹ 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 grounds maintenance continued to rise due to increased commercial activity. In 2017/18 emissions rose by 2% on the previous year.
- Emissions from staff transport continued to fall, with emissions down by 3% compared to the previous year.
- Emissions from electricity consumption were down by 11% on the previous year.
- Emissions from increased gas consumption requires further attention as this has increased by 4% for Forest Heath and 3% for St Edmundsbury compared to the 2010 baseline.
- Abbeycroft Leisure properties at Newmarket and Brandon reduced emissions associated with gas and electricity use by 7% whilst Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Leisure Centres reduced by 2%.
- The large drop in emissions for Forest Heath was due to improved efficiency of electrical energy consumption and the impact of "greening" of the grid.

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 target.

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, vehicle-related emissions and leisure centre energy consumption.

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

2017/18 performance

Forest Heath	1,304 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	2,915 tonnes CO ₂ e

Comments

Energy consumption performance across both Councils' sites has been maintained or improved at most sites:

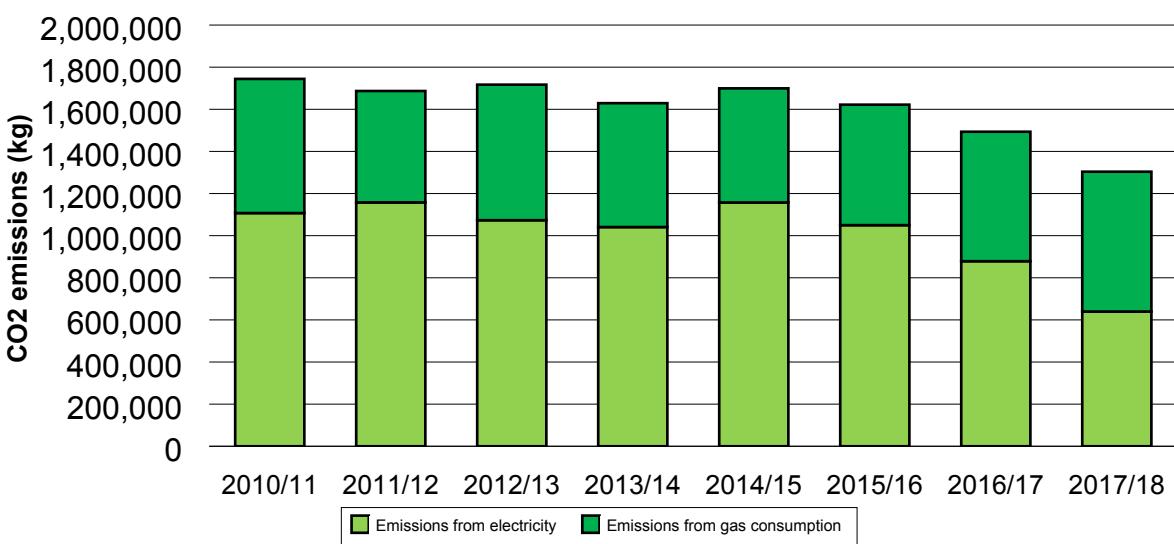
- Significant improvement in the control of electrical heating/cooling systems at College Heath Road have helped reduce overall electrical energy consumption.
- However notable issues affecting the control of heating at West Suffolk House, College Heath Rd, Haverhill Offices and the ongoing over consumption in St Edmundsbury Depot meant that gas consumption rose. Works are underway to address these control issues.

Therefore, the "greening" or decarbonisation of the electrical grid has enabled us to report an overall reduction in building related emissions despite similar electricity consumption across St Edmundsbury sites and increases in gas consumption for both Councils.

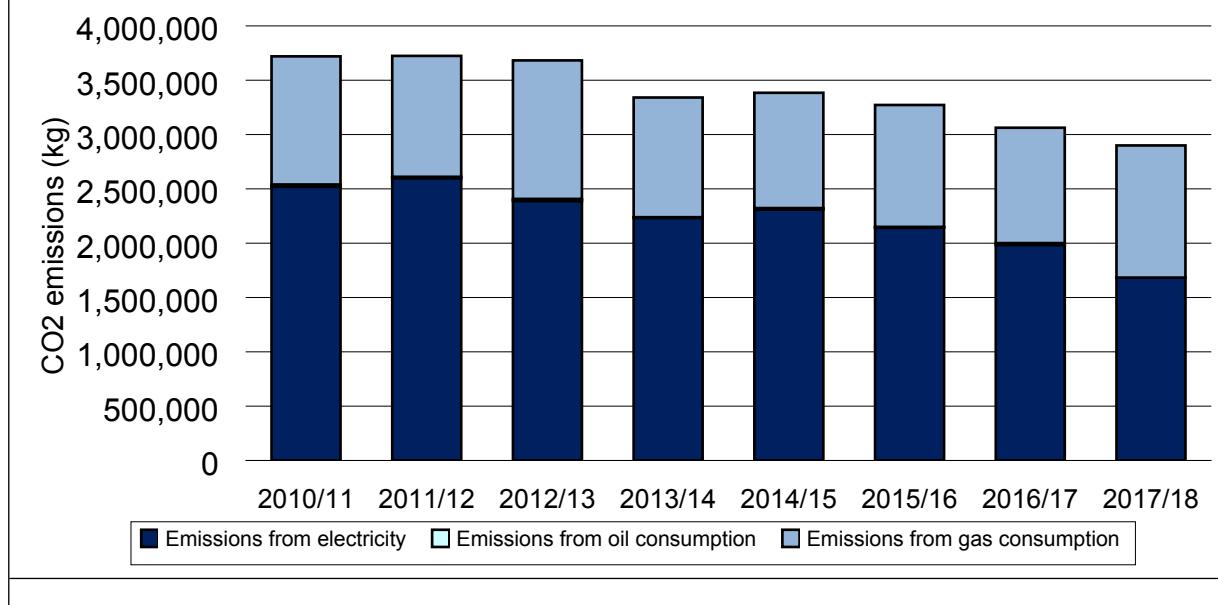
Significant energy efficiency improvement projects completed in 2017/18 included:

- Building management control system updates for The Apex and West Suffolk House.
- Commercial building insulation and LED lighting projects.
- Electrical energy efficiency improvements maintained at College Heath Road.
- Gas energy monitoring for key sites – reporting to Property Services for action by staff on site or controls and mechanical engineers.

FHDC- Breakdown of CO₂ emissions by fuel type



SEBC - Breakdown of CO2 emissions by fuel type



Renewable energy

Baseline year: 2012/13

Total renewable energy generation	300,220 kWh
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2017/18 Performance

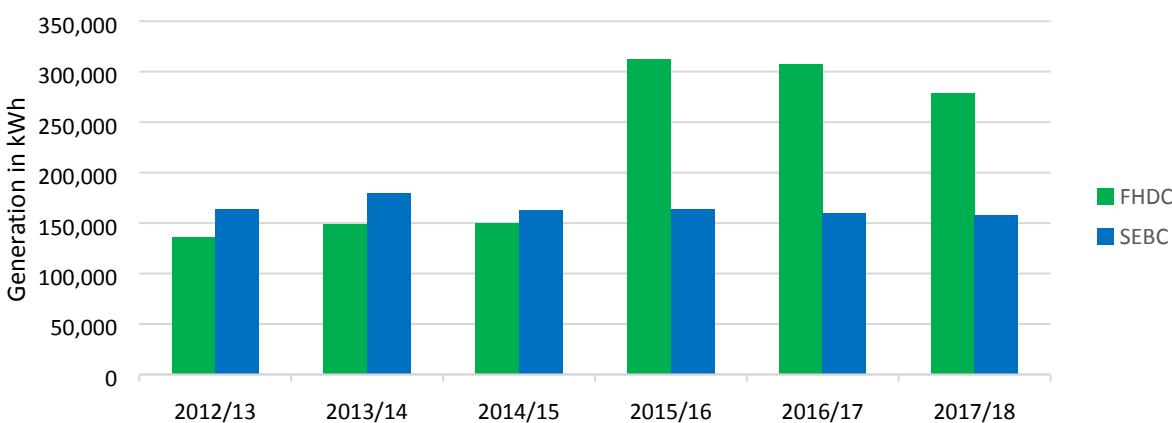
Total renewable energy generation	437,227 kWh
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Renewable energy generation - Buildings

The Councils continue to generate power from renewable energy sources, notably solar photovoltaic on our own property. In 2017/18, 437,227 kWh were generated, enough to power 123 average homes. Overall generation has decreased by 7% compared to last year, primarily driven by reduced solar irradiation (mainly in quarter two) and two key sites suffering from poor performance due to a technical failure. These sites have since been repaired and are performing well.

We are planning to install renewable heat and power generation to replace heating oil and inefficient underfloor electricity heating at West Stow Park during 2018/19.

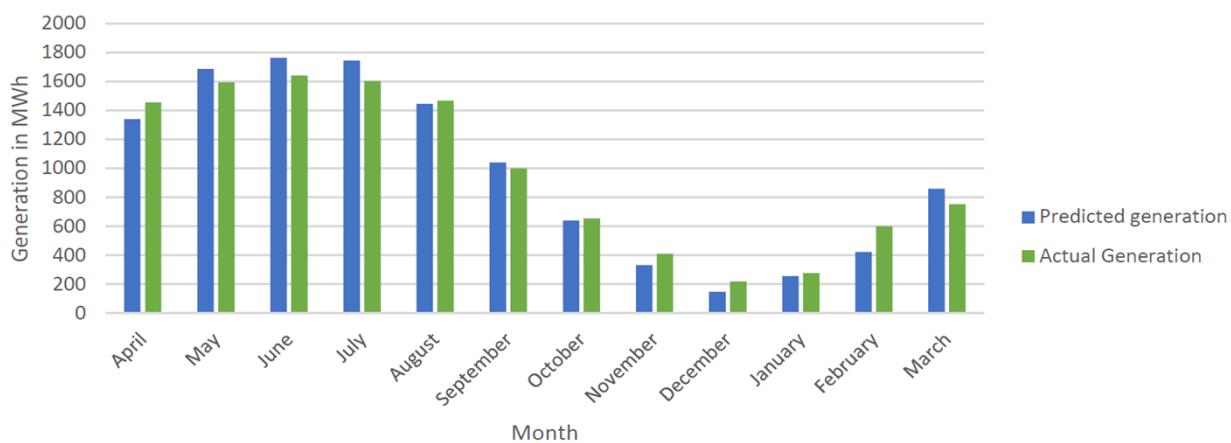
Solar PV Electricity Generation (kWh)



Renewable energy generation – Commercial generation

Figures for the 12 months to the end of March show that Toggam Solar generated 11,687MWh slightly above the 11,682MWh that had been predicted. The electricity is sold into the local power grid, and was enough to power around 3,300 homes and offset the carbon dioxide emissions from 1,500 cars.

Toggam Solar Farm 2017/18 Electricity Generation



Future of Renewable Energy Projects

The Feed-In Tariff which has helped to support the uptake of renewable power generation will be phased out by 2019. However, there are still opportunities for installing viable

renewable energy installations on both Council and commercial properties; due to a reduction in installation costs, the continuation in the renewable heat incentive and projected increases in utility costs.

Commercial vehicle fuel use and emissions

Target: to be reviewed in 2018/19

Baseline Year: 2010

Commercial fleet fuel use in baseline year

West Suffolk total	620,442 litres
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2017/18 performance

West Suffolk total	571,796 litres
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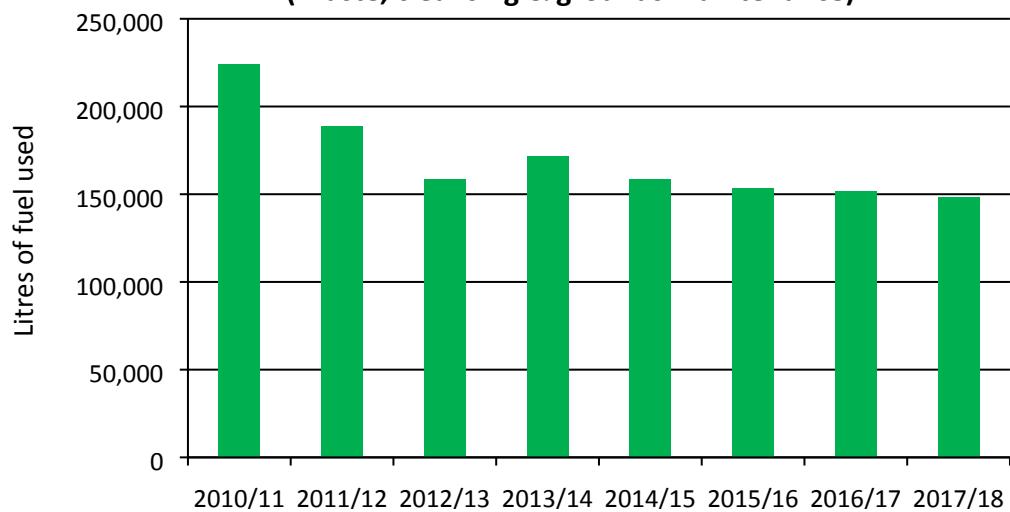
Comments

During 2017/18 the Councils' commercial vehicle use has continued to grow. These vehicles deliver statutory and non-statutory operations and include refuse trucks or road sweepers, grounds maintenance vehicles, Petrol or Diesel bought using fuel cards, and industrial mobile machinery.

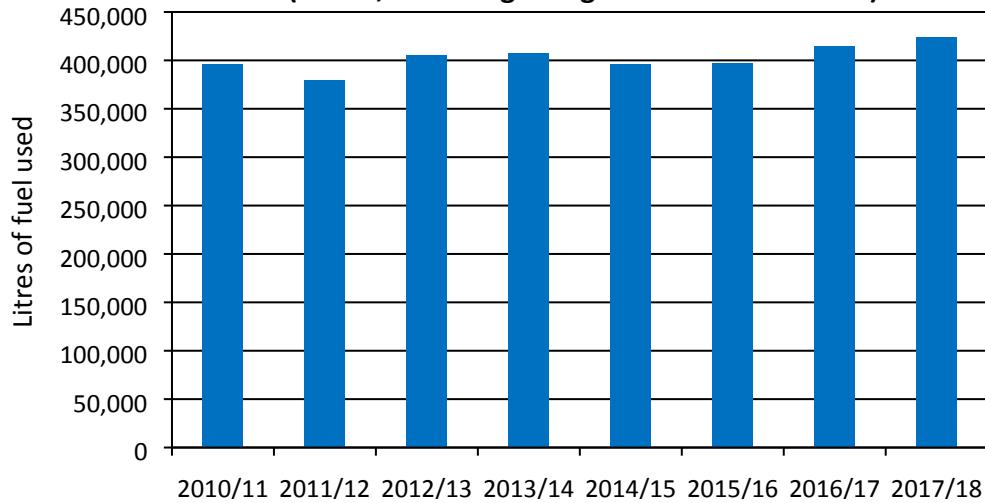
The growth in demand for grounds maintenance and skip hire services have supported the purchasing of additional vehicles and resulted in a rise in emissions. Although fuel purchased at external garages makes up a small proportion of total fuel consumption, this has decreased by 83% compared to 2016/17.

We will be reviewing the opportunities to reduce emissions arising from commercial vehicle use to inform future targets and action plans.

**FHDC - Commercial fleet fuel use
(Waste, cleansing & grounds maintenance)**



**SEBC - Commercial fleet fuel use
(waste, cleansing and grounds maintenance)**



Business mileage

Target: to be reviewed in 2018/19

Baseline Year: 2014

Business vehicle passenger travel in baseline year:

West Suffolk total	677,073 miles
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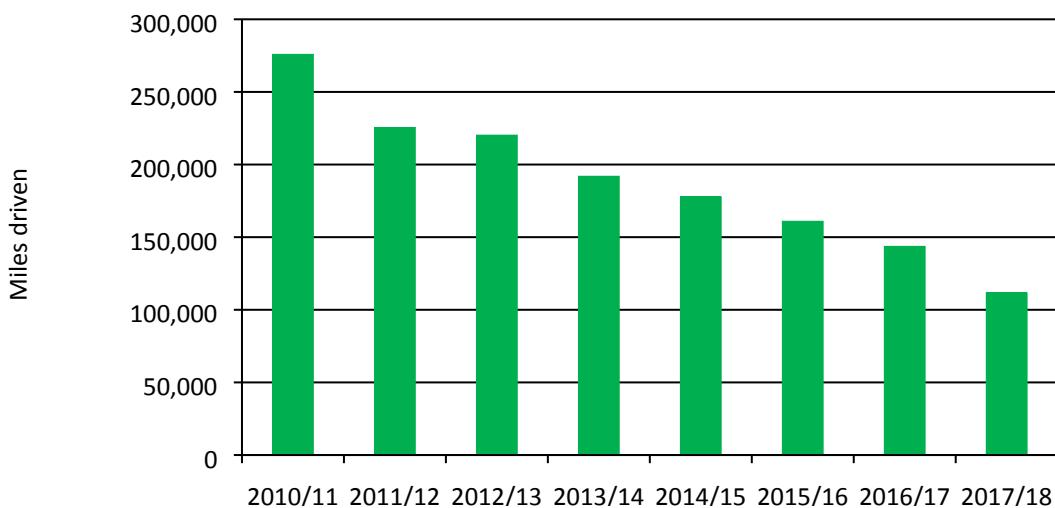
2017/18 performance

West Suffolk total	485,834 miles
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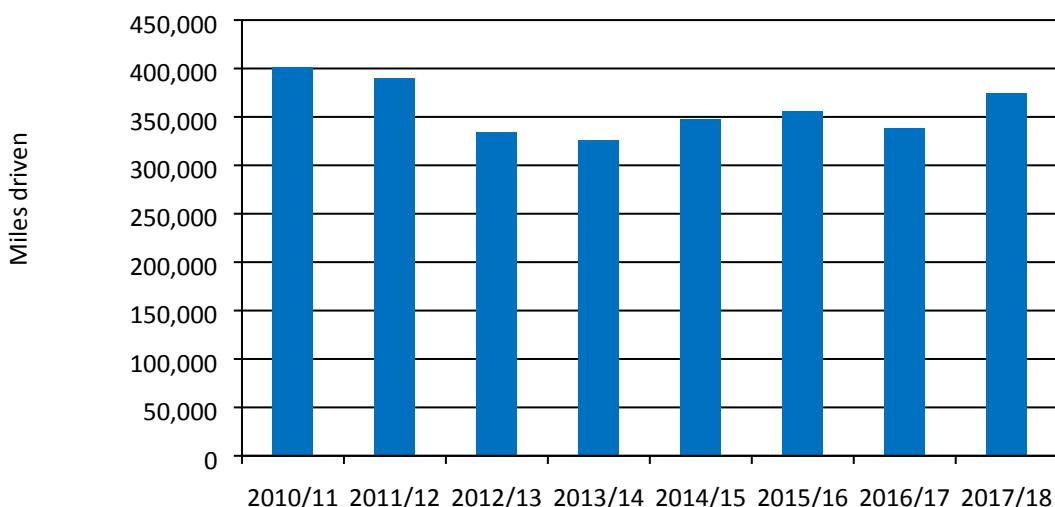
Comments

Business vehicle passenger travel includes staff mileage claimed through the expenses system, pool car use and other owned or leased vehicles. During 2017/18 staff mileage claimed through the expenses system reduced by 3% from 435,067 miles to 420,780 miles.

FHDC - Business passenger travel



SEBC - Business passenger travel



There are facilities in place to reduce the need for officers to travel for meetings including teleconference packages such as Skype. For those who do need to travel locally, pool bikes are available at WSH. In addition, we continue to promote sustainable travel options; for example, we organised a bike servicing event where staff were able to get their bikes serviced by a local company encouraging staff to travel to and from work and meetings safely.

Public awareness of issues relating to air quality has continued to increase especially following the government's announcement in July 2017 to ban conventionally fuelled cars in 2040. There has also been an increase in the use of public charge points outside of West Suffolk House and therefore, over 2018/19 we shall investigate installing new staff charging facilities to allow staff to switch to ultra-low emissions vehicles.

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. Reducing emissions associated with transport use will continue to be a priority during 2018/19.

We will also be reviewing the opportunities to reduce emissions arising from pool cars and staff vehicle use to inform future targets and action plans.

Water use

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

Baseline year - 2010 (recalculated June 2014)

Water use in baseline year

West Suffolk Councils	23,827 cubic metres
ACL	51,076 cubic metres
Total	74,903 cubic metres

2017/18 performance

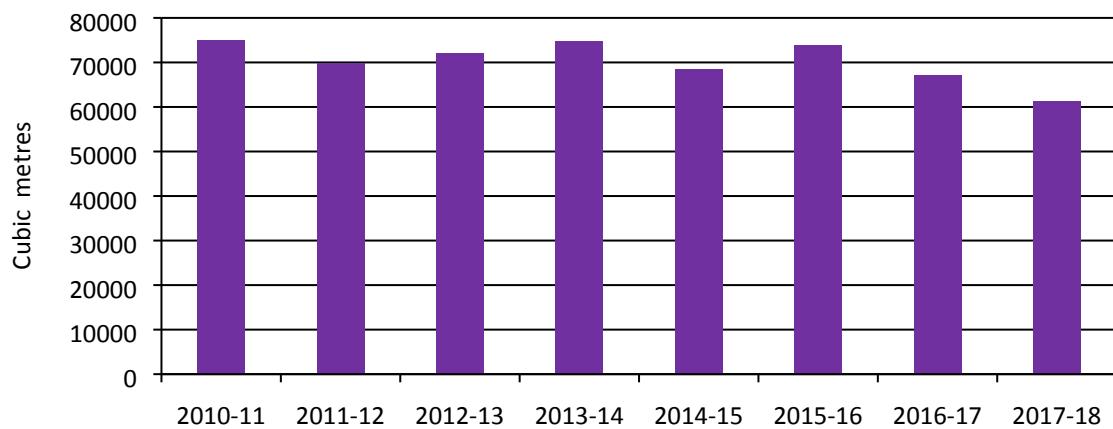
West Suffolk Councils	20,486 cubic metres
ACL	40,774 cubic metres
Total	61,260 cubic metres

Comments

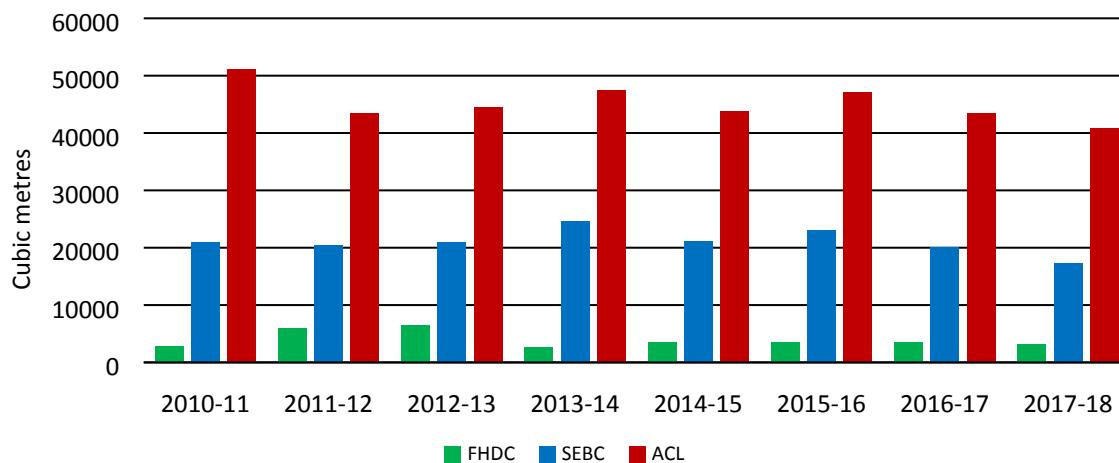
Leisure centre water use decreased by 6.3% compared to the previous year along with a 13.5% drop across property operated by the Councils over the same period. Reduced water consumption at Council sites has been attributed to better understanding of usage patterns since the installation of automatic metering (AMR) and less requirement for watering of parks.

Using the AMR data, we are able to monitor water consumption of our assets with greater detail focusing on consumption outside of normal working hours.

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.

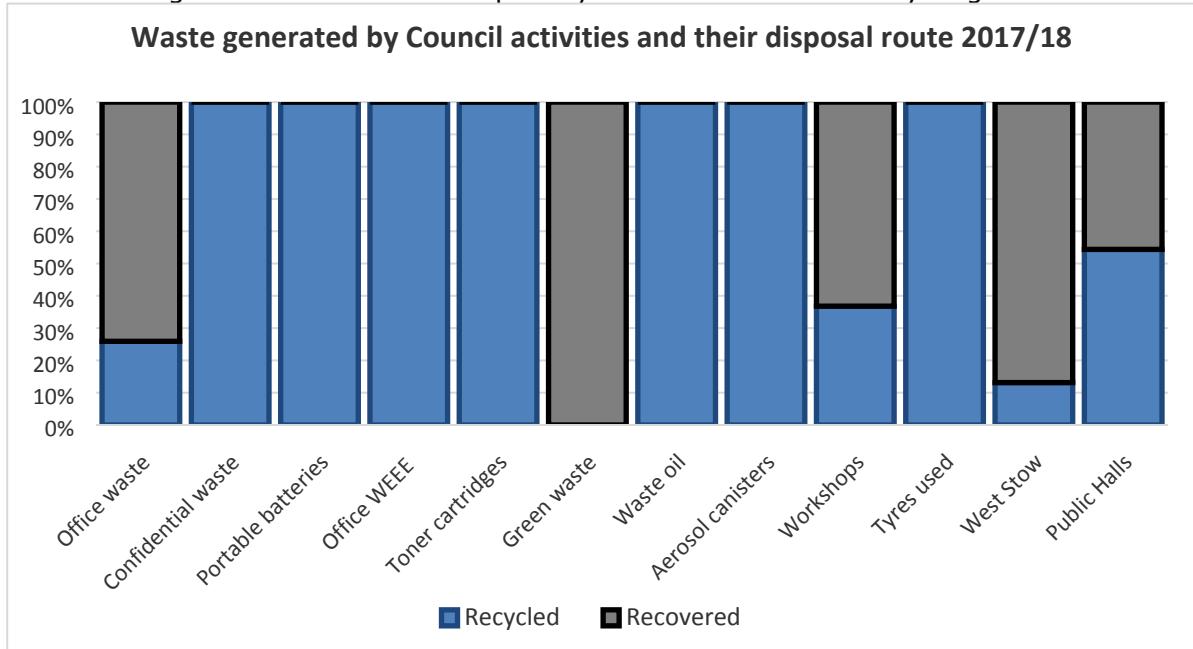
2017/18 performance

- 7 waste streams 100% recycled.
- 4 waste streams with potential to increase the recycling rate to 50% or above.

Comments

The Councils continue 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.

The following chart sets out current priority waste streams and recycling rates.

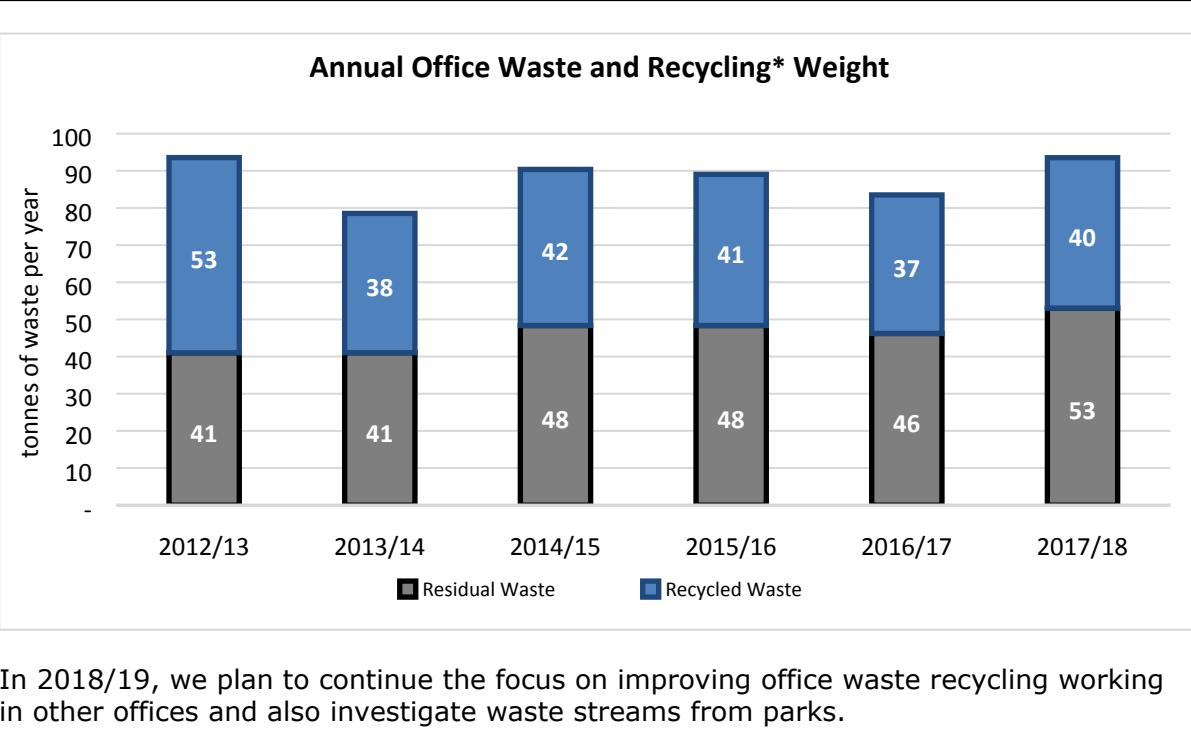


Office Waste Streams

During 2017/18, we undertook a number of investigations to understand office based waste streams better. A waste audit of West Suffolk House helped us to develop tailored communications. This was followed up by the production and use of an in-house educational video, updated bin signage and intranet updates. Potential sources of contamination (blue paper towel, paper cups, food waste and soft plastics) were identified as target materials and included in the communications.

The chart on the next page shows the annual proportions of recycled and residual waste from office facilities – Note - *Office recycling incorporates: office recycling, confidential waste, portable batteries, office WEEE and toner cartridges. In 2017/18, the total amount of waste created was 93 tonnes with residual waste accounting for 53 tonnes and recycled waste 40 tonnes. The rise in residual waste is an increase of 12% on the previous year.

The proportion of total waste recycled has decreased from 44.65% to 43.27%. We believe that office reorganisation and the need for staff to dispose of files and documents may have impacted on the office waste and recycling weights.



Biodiversity and parks

Target: To maintain or increase the number of Green Flag accredited sites.

Baseline:

Park performance against Green Flag criteria:

- Achieve Green Flag status at four parks in West Suffolk

2017/18 performance

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

1. Abbey Gardens
2. Nowton Park
3. East Town Park
4. West Stow.

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

Ongoing Biodiversity and Natural Environment Programmes

Aspal Close Nature Reserve –

Suffolk Wildlife Trust were commissioned to undertake extended phase 1 habitat surveys to map and understand protected species distribution; species include – Breckland Thyme, Sickle Medick, Bur Medick and Hoary Cinquefoil.

In 2017/18 habitat improvements were undertaken to accommodate the translocation of reptile species and protected plant species from an adjacent development. The plants survived the summer and are doing well (Sand Catchfly and Bee Orchid). The bare ground is slowly being colonised naturally by Breckland species and will be monitored on an annual basis.

There are approx. 15 hectares of grassland on the reserve which will be subject to a new form of management in 2018/19. This will minimise disturbance to the invertebrate and reptile populations and allow for a more flexible approach to the cutting schedule to accommodate late flowering species. Much of the central grassland area is a strong hold for the Wild Rockrose a rarity for Suffolk.

Brecks

The Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership has now been successful in obtaining £151,100 in stage 1 funding from the Heritage lottery for a new scheme entitled 'Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers'.

This initiative will, if successful during stage 2, include a number of projects to improve the watercourses in the Brecks area.



Environmental compliance

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

Target date: Ongoing

Baseline: 100% legal compliance for our operations

2017/18 performance

The Councils continued to ensure effective compliance with environmental regulations.

There was one significant issue, a fuel spill following an incident in January 2018 at the Western Way Depot that required reporting to the Environment Agency (EA). However, this did not constitute any formal action being taken by a regulatory body.

In 2018/19, we intend to review our internal auditing processes to ensure ongoing compliance and identify improvements in practice as appropriate.