

Appendix A



West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2014-15

Our commitment to Sustainability

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

A range of priority themes have been identified which we wish to influence through our 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 West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy which incorporates our vision and objectives is available via www.westsuffolk.gov.uk.

Set out in the following pages is a snapshot of our performance to the year ending 31st March 2015.

Given the scope of this report, 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.

Our environmental performance in 2014-15

The Councils continued working to improve environmental performance during the year. Areas where significant progress was made include:

- Energy use has decreased across our property portfolio by 7% since 2013 and by 16.7% compared to our 2010 baseline
- Water use across the two councils and associated leisure trusts has reduced by 12% since last year and 27% compared to 2010
- Our solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes continue to deliver around £118,000 of income/energy savings and 166 tonnes of CO₂ savings annually
- We installed a further 200kWp of solar capacity on our property delivering around £32,000 of income/savings and saving 30 tonnes of CO₂ savings annually
- We retained Green Flag status for four public parks.

In addition, our community-focused environmental work includes:

- continued support for the Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People fuel poverty programme during winter 2014
- developing a long-term energy investment plan alongside our existing support for improved community energy efficiency. This forms the West Suffolk Councils' Community Energy Plan which will take effect from April 2015
- providing local businesses with our West Suffolk Greener Business Grant funding for energy efficiency measures. To date, for a grant investment of £47,500 this programme is estimated to be saving local businesses over £56,000 and 235 tonnes of CO₂ annually.

We faced challenges during the year which caused our performance to fall below our targets. In particular, business passenger car travel increased by 1.5% compared to last year but remains 22% lower than our 2010 baseline.

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%²

Target date: 2025

Baseline year: 2010

Baseline (2010 recalculated June 2015):

Forest Heath	2,493 tonnes CO ₂ e
St Edmundsbury	4,892 tonnes CO ₂ e

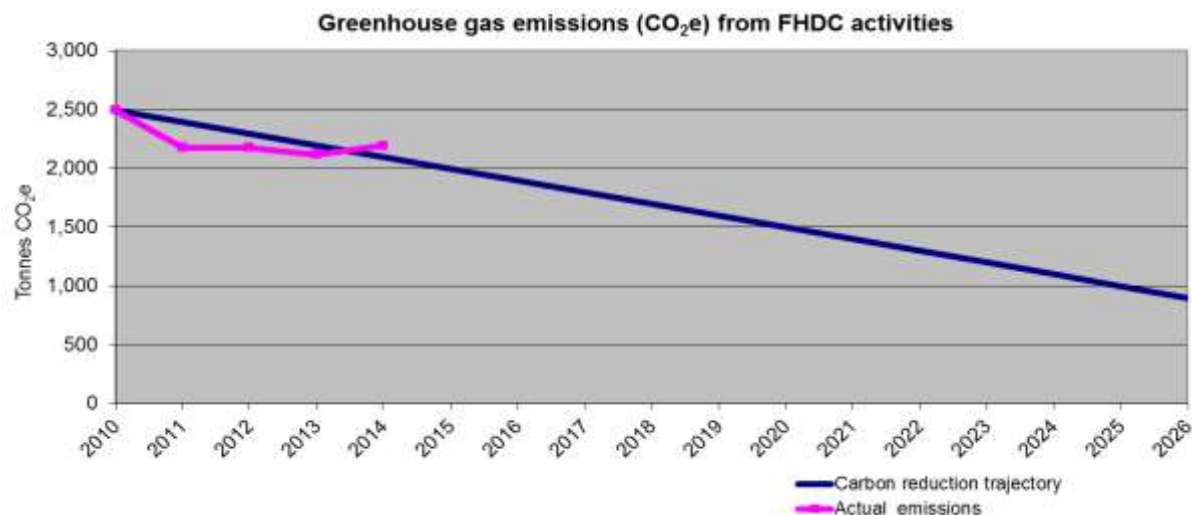
The footprint comprises of three components:

- 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, Mildenhall) within the respective Council's footprint. This is because we own the buildings and have a direct commissioning relationship with the Trusts.

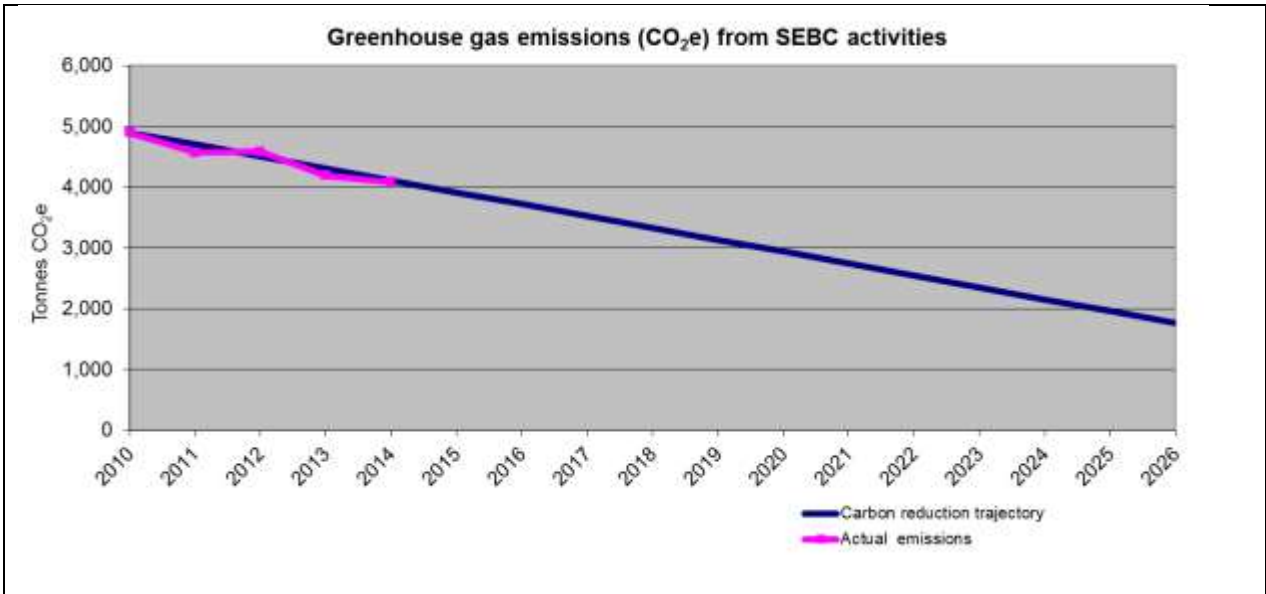
Under government reporting rules, each Council publish their own Greenhouse Gas Inventories annually with the first publication made in July 2011 for the financial year 2010/11. These are available on the Councils' websites.

2014-15 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. It is worth noting that the purchase of green electricity cannot be used to claim carbon savings under the methodology.

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.



CO₂ emissions in Forest Heath increased by 3.6% compared to the previous year. Emissions for St Edmundsbury showed a 2.5% reduction. Compared to our 2010 baseline, emissions have reduced generally by 12% for Forest Heath and by 16.5% for St Edmundsbury.

Much of the increase is despite energy use across both Councils reducing by 7.4% since the previous year and can be explained by the increase in CO₂ emissions at power stations arising from the national grid electricity mix. This is outside of the control of the councils. A more detailed explanation is given in the following sections.

Building energy use

Target:

Reduce carbon emissions associated with building energy

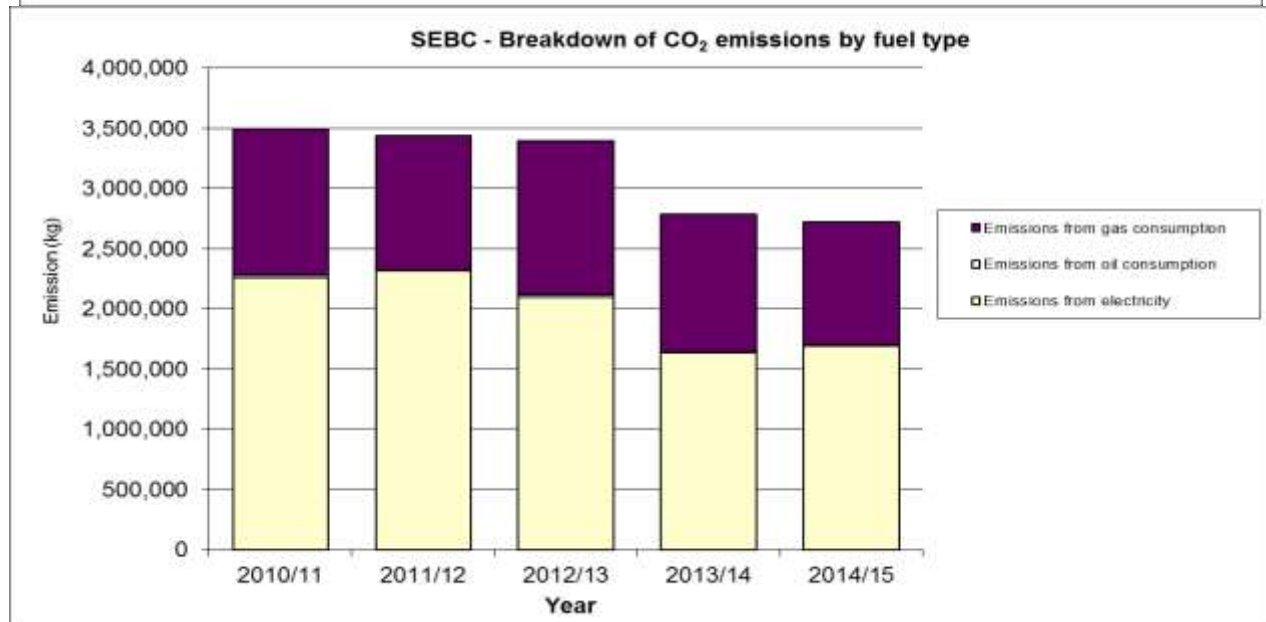
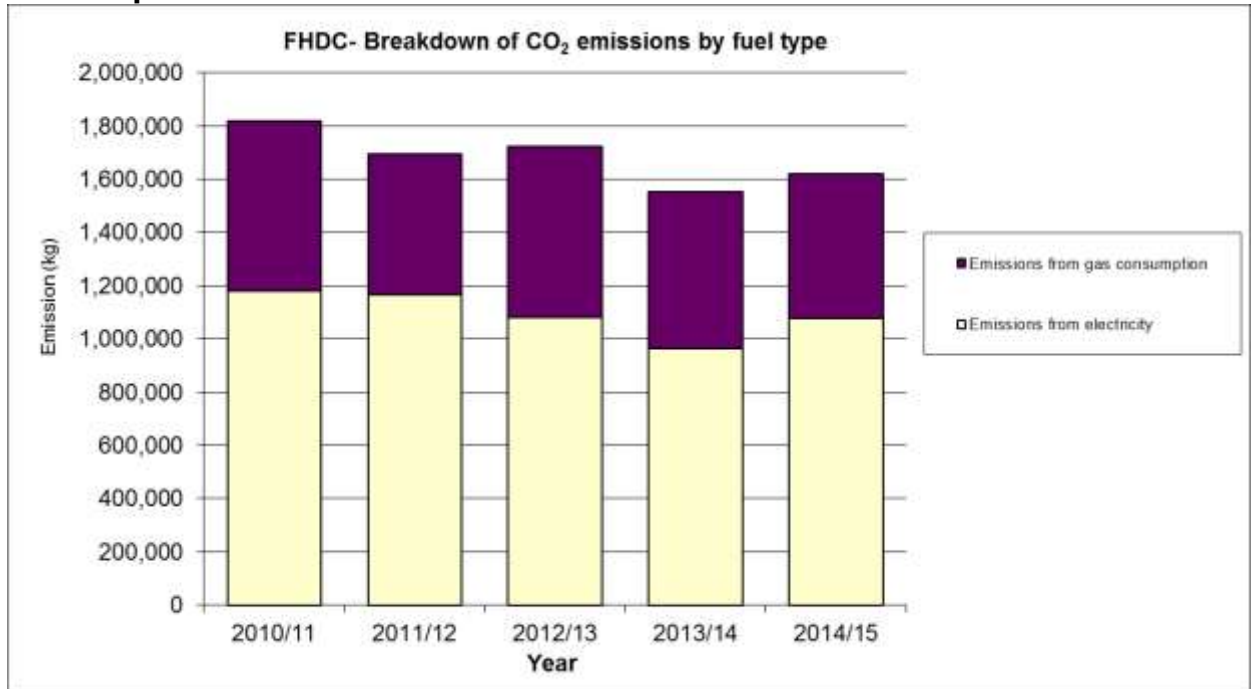
Target date: 2025

Baseline year: 2010 (recalculated June 2015)

Forest Heath
St Edmundsbury

1,817 tonnes CO₂e
3,476 tonnes CO₂e

2014-15 performance



2014-15 performance

Compared to 2013-14, gas consumption reduced by 11% across the St Edmundsbury/Abbeycroft property portfolios while Forest Heath/ACL showed an 8% reduction. Electricity use increased by 3% across St Edmundsbury/Abbeycroft while a 1% increase was seen within FHDC/ACL.

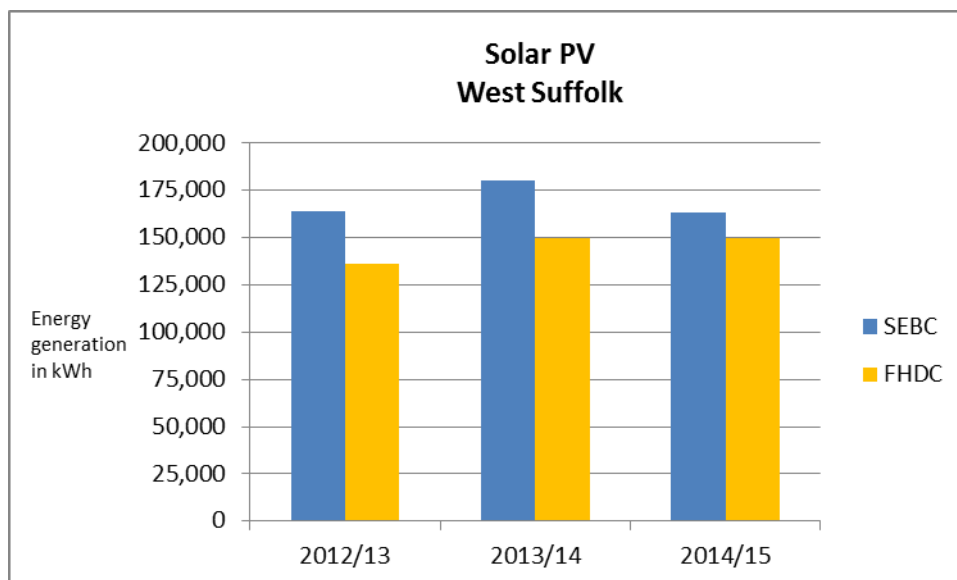
Investment has been made in energy efficiency measures, such as improved insulation at

Bury Leisure Centre and replacing boilers at Brandon Leisure Centre.

The Councils continue to work to make more efficient use of existing buildings, particularly office accommodation, by renting out space to other organisations. In addition, increased attendance at public venues including the leisure centres across West Suffolk has been accommodated without leading to a corresponding increase in energy use.

Work is planned in 2015-16 to upgrade lighting at the multi-storey car parks under council control in West Suffolk which should lead to further cost and energy reductions.

Renewable energy generation



In 2011, the Councils invested in solar panels to generate electricity. The systems generated 313,000 kWh of electricity in 2014. This resulted in approximately 166 tonnes of CO₂ savings and financial benefit to the Councils of £118,000 resulting from energy savings and income from the Feed-in Tariff.

Forest Heath District Council invested in a further 200kWp of solar generating capacity at Brandon and Newmarket Leisure Centres in March 2015. The benefit of this investment will be seen in the next year. It is estimated that the new installations should deliver around £32,000 of income/savings and saving 30 tonnes of CO₂ savings annually.

Transport use

Target:

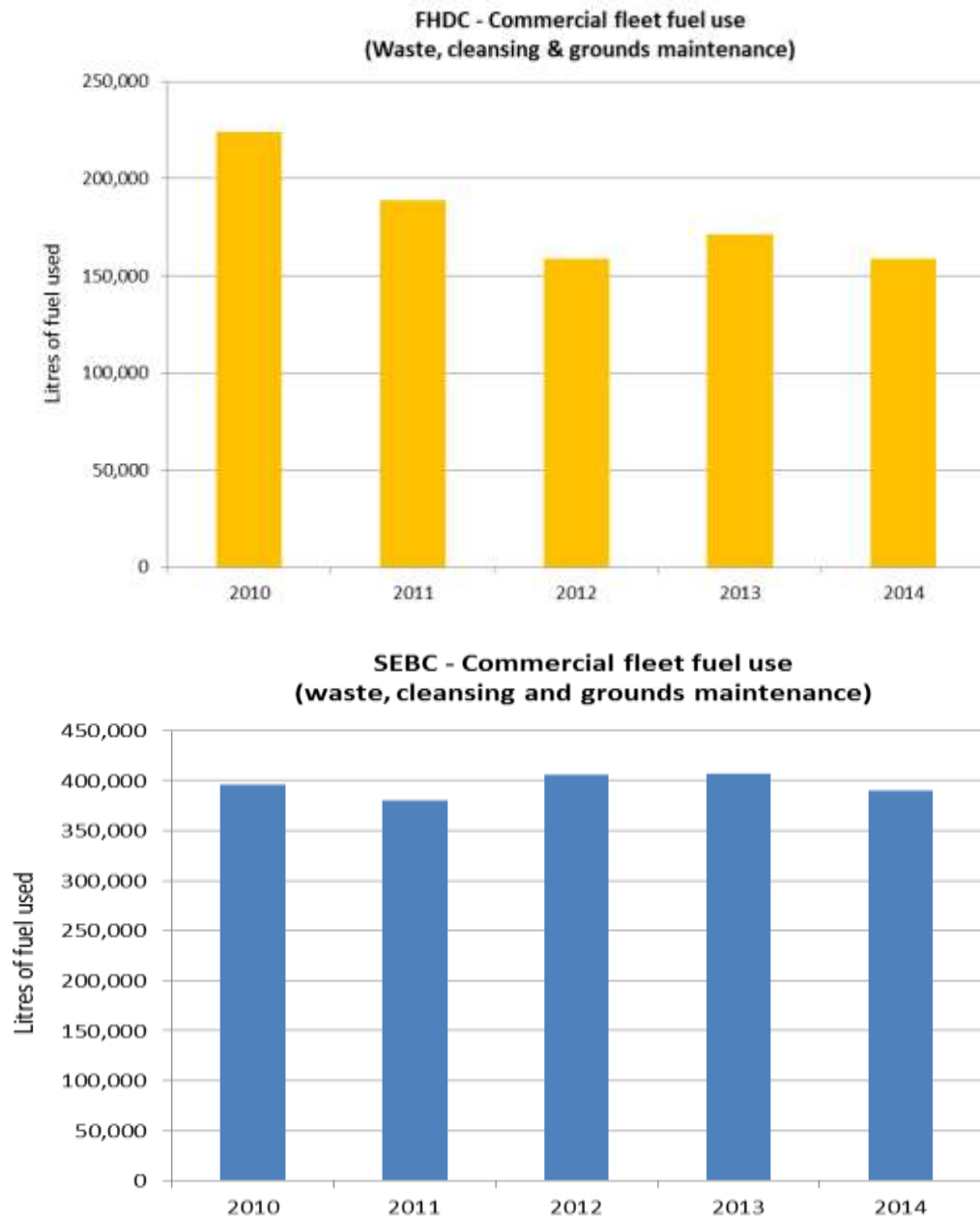
Reduce the amount of fuel used by the Council's commercial fleet

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

2014-15 performance



Our combined West Suffolk commercial fleet, which provides refuse collection, cleansing and grounds maintenance services, used 30,000 litres less fuel in 2014 compared with the previous year. Compared to the 2010 baseline, fleet fuel use has decreased by 11%. 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:

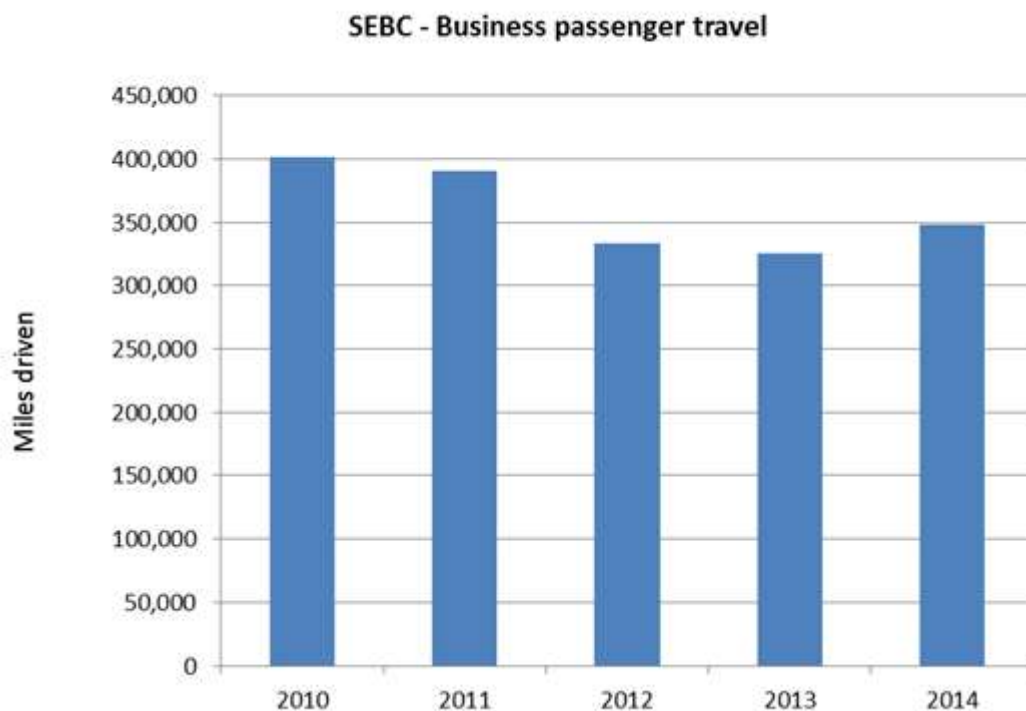
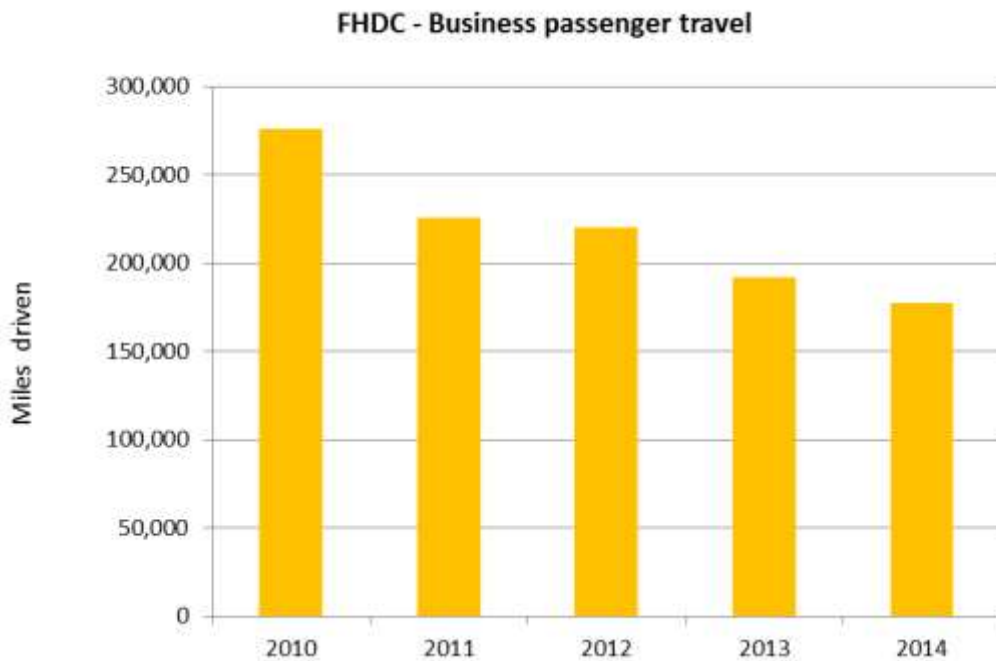
Reduce the total amount of Council passenger mileage.

Baseline Year: 2010

Business passenger travel in baseline year:

Forest Heath	275,855 miles
St Edmundsbury	401,218 miles
West Suffolk total	677,073 miles

2014-15 performance



Business car travel for West Suffolk reduced by 22% since 2010, dropping from 677,000 miles to 523,000 in 2014.

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 plan. The fact that staff work across both authority areas will make it less meaningful to report Council-specific mileage in future years.

The Councils launched a two year business mileage reduction programme in January 2015, with the target of reducing staff travel by 10% each year. The impact of this programme will be reported in next year's statement.

Water use

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

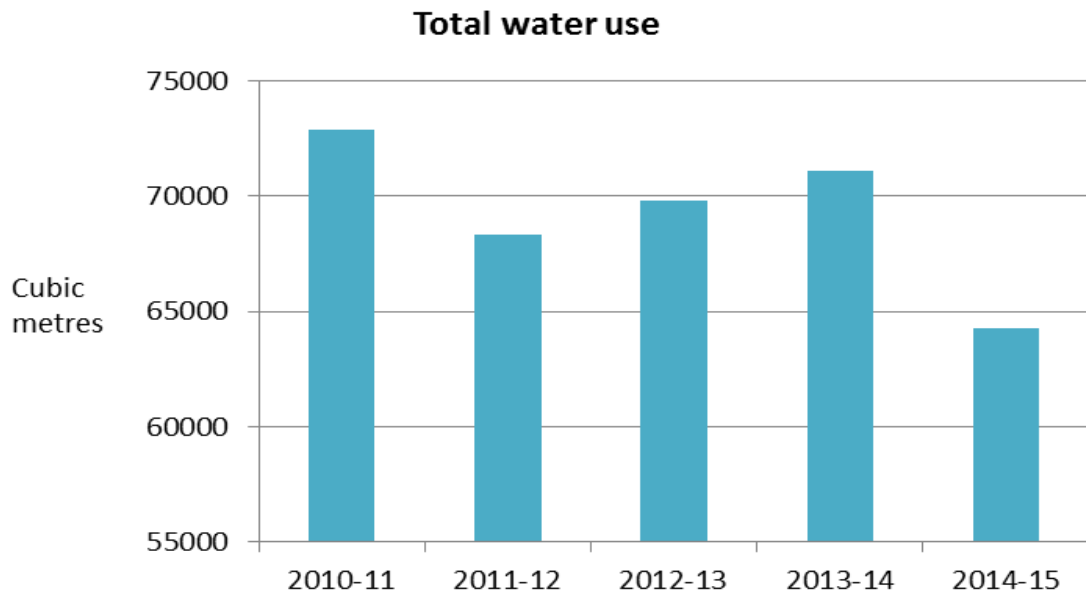
Baseline year - 2010 (recalculated June 2014)

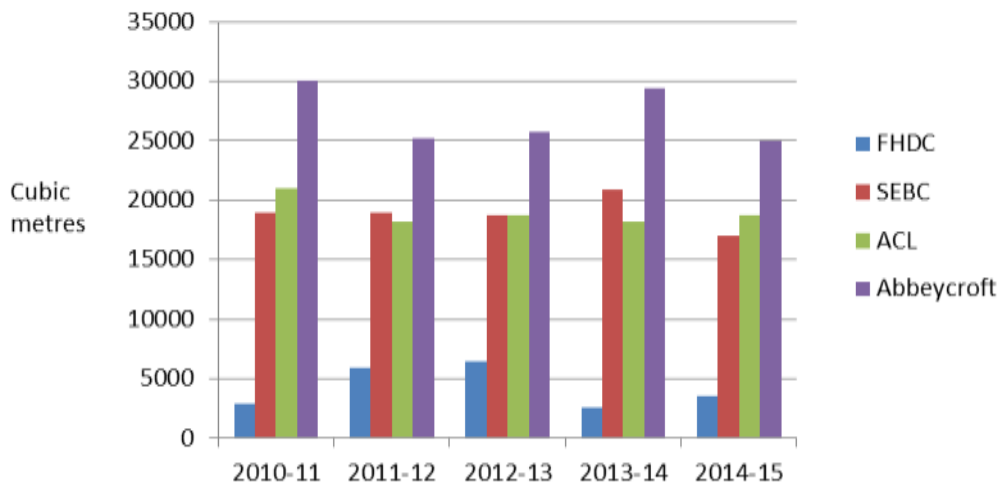
Water use in baseline year

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 two leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure are included in the baseline to accord with the Council's Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The leisure centres account for around 70% of total water use.

2014-15 performance





Water use has dropped by 9.5% since last year and by 11.8% since 2010 to 64,200 cubic metres. Work was nearing completion at the end of the period to install a separate borehole water supply at Homefield Road depot in Haverhill while all three depots were transferred to trade effluent tariffs which should lead to a financial saving. Significant reductions were achieved at Homefield Road depot following the identification and subsequent fixing of a leak in 2013 and at St Edmundsbury Depot in Bury St Edmunds by improved metering and billing arrangements.

Biodiversity

Target: Demonstrate habitat improvements at Green Flag Accredited Sites

Baseline: Four Green Flag parks

2014-15 performance

The following sites successfully retained Green Flag accreditation in 2014-15:

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

Nowton Park (see cover)

A small flock of sheep have been introduced to the park in March 2015 to help maintain the grasslands in a more sustainable way and manage the sward to become more floristic and favour a wider range of native herbs.

East Town Park, Haverhill

In partnership with the Suffolk Bat Group some 20 bat boxes have been erected in the park and will be monitored by the bat group over the coming year to discover more about the local bat population in Haverhill.

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.

Guarded Orchard in Newmarket

Work has started on a management plan for this semi-natural area on the northern fringes of Newmarket. Consultations with the local Go Wild In Newmarket Group and the Residents Association is underway along with a condition survey of the site and appraisal of its connectivity in to the heart of the town.



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

The Crankles (Bury St Edmunds)

This former cricket bat willow plantation adjacent to the Abbey Gardens is being converted to an area for pollinating insects. Phase one was started in early Spring 2015, felling nearly all the trees to be sent off to be converted to cricket bats or wood pulp. Phase two that will see preparation and planting for new trees and plants of a greater variety will start in the Autumn.



The Crankles



Brandon (London Road)

Brandon (London Road)

This small reserve amongst an industrial estate contains 90% of the UK population of a rare plant - Field Southernwood (*Artemisia campestris*). The grassland has been cut and collected in early Spring to keep fertility of the soil down and allow the plant to compete effectively with other species.



Maidscross Hill reserve, Lakenheath

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

Maidscross Hill reserve (Lakenheath)

The boundary of the reserve and adjacent farm land has scrubbed up over the last 10 years in an area where important species associated with breckland grassland were

known to be present. In partnership with Natural England and the landowner a 5x100m section has been cut right back to open the area up again with a view to encourage plants like the wild grape hyacinth.

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.

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.

The councils continue to carry out their activities to achieve commitments set out in the West Suffolk Sustainability Strategy adopted in 2013.