



West Suffolk Council Environmental Statement 2025-2026





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1. Introduction

This report is a summary of the environmental impact from the activities West Suffolk Council (WSC) undertook during the financial year ending 31 March 2026.

In 2019 West Suffolk Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency and subsequently agreed a Climate Change Action Plan that included initiatives to improve the environment in West Suffolk. Progress against this plan is reviewed annually by the Environmental and Sustainability Reference Group (ESRG) and the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and reported to Cabinet. A key part of the first action plan was setting an ambition for the Council itself to be net zero by 2030 in relation to its own direct emissions.

In 2025, a comprehensive review of the Council's progress towards net zero was conducted, identifying areas for improvement and prioritising high-impact actions. This review concluded that a revised target date of 2039 would be achievable yet still ambitious. Good progress has already been made, and significant further investment is planned in the next few years, such as the removal of fossil fuel plant at Bury and Haverhill Leisure Centres and replacing with air source heat pumps (ASHPs).

The revised trajectory has been summarised in five-year periods in Table 1, and the Roadmap to Net Zero (Figure 1) provides a visual summary of how the council and any successor authority could achieve the new 2039 target in relation to West Suffolk Council's current activities. Measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

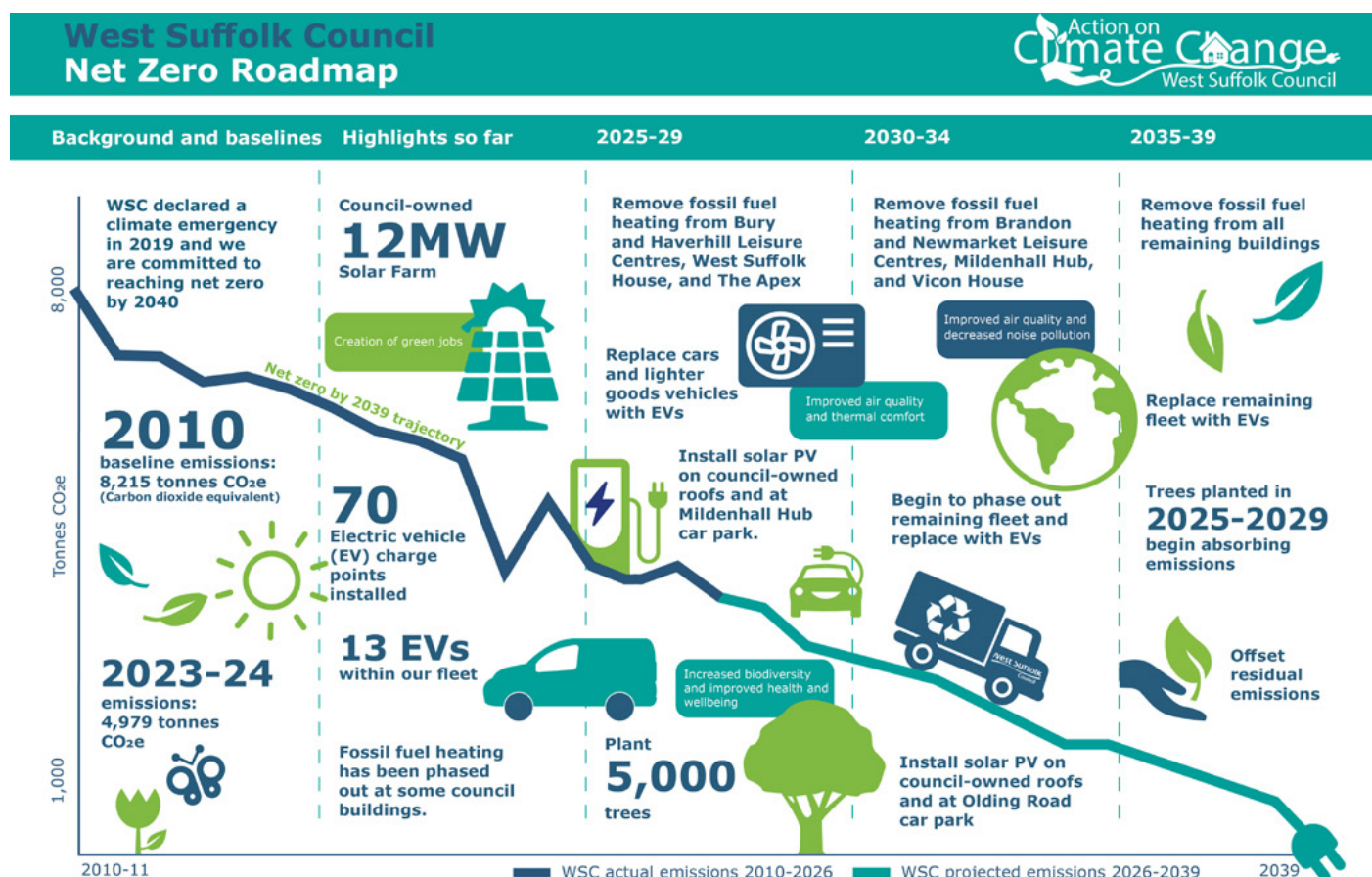


Figure 1 Roadmap to net zero carbon emissions

Table 1 shows the planned emissions reductions for meeting West Suffolk Council's 2039 net zero target.

Period	Emissions reduction during period	Emissions at end of period
2025-29	1,618 tCO ₂ e	4,060 tCO ₂ e
2030-34	1,198 tCO ₂ e	2,862 tCO ₂ e
2035-39	833 tCO ₂ e	2,029 tCO ₂ e
2039-40	2,029 tCO ₂ e *	Net zero emissions

*It is estimated that 1,320 tCO₂e of the council's residual emissions will come from electricity consumption. If the council continues to purchase renewable electricity in 2039, residual emissions will be much lower. Any residual emissions will be offset in a credible, transparent, and robust manner.

This statement focuses on the council's own emissions. There is also a significant amount of pro-environmental work across the district which is not covered in this statement. This work is carried out both by the council directly and in conjunction with partners (for example, off-site renewable energy investments, grant schemes and recycling rates). These activities prevent at least 7,000 tonnes of carbon a year from entering the atmosphere. **In this way, the council already saves more carbon indirectly than it emits directly.** More information can be found on the council's webpage [tackling climate change](#).

The methodology used to write this report is based on the Government's [Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting \(SECR\)](#) requirements. The council is not obliged to report under these regulations but reports on a voluntary basis. A breakdown of reporting scopes and details of any estimated data is included in Appendix 2.

The methodology used to write this report is based on the Government's [Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting \(SECR\)](#) requirements. The council is not obliged to report under these regulations but reports on a voluntary basis. A breakdown of reporting scopes, and details of any estimated data is included in Appendix 2. The next page highlights an increase in gas and electricity consumption since the 2019-20 baseline; this is primarily driven by the opening of Mildenhall Hub, further explained in Appendix 2.



Overview of environmental performance during 2025-2026

Emissions

Total emissions figures include West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure

37%

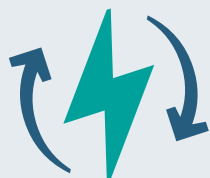
Reduction in total emissions compared to 2010 baseline



4.8%

reduction in total emissions compared to 2024-25

Consumption and energy



26%

Increase in renewable energy generated compared to 2024-25

Up 286% compared to 2012 baseline

£906,576

Total expected income from the council's rooftop solar installed on third party businesses and council-owned buildings



5%

Decrease in total water consumption compared to 2024-25

Up 23% compared to 2010-11 baseline

8%

Decrease in grid electricity consumption compared to 2024-25

Up 46% compared to 2019-20 baseline



14%

Decrease in gas consumption compared to 2024-25

Up 32% compared to 2019-20 baseline

12%

Increase in office printing compared to 2024-25

Down 62% compared to 2018-19 baseline



Travel



4%

Increase in total owned vehicle emissions compared to 2024-25

Down 9% compared to 2019-20 baseline

Total miles driven by the council's EV fleet saved approximately £20,176 in diesel costs



0.5%

Decrease in business travel compared to 2024-25

60% less business travel compared to 2010 baseline

Infrastructure and recycling

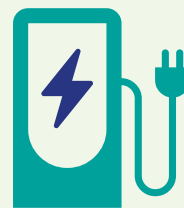


15%

decrease in total West Suffolk House waste compared to 2024-25

17% reduction in total West Suffolk House waste compared to 2012 baseline

The recycling rate was 64%, down 2% compared to 2024-25



124

Electric vehicles (EV) can be charged at the same time using public chargers installed by West Suffolk Council, and in partnership with Suffolk County Council

This is a 59% increase compared to 2024-25. Energy delivered to drivers powered 423,773 miles, down 22% compared to 2024-25

Environment and green spaces



6

Green Flags retained

Abbey Gardens, East Town Park, Brandon Country Park, Aspal Close & West Stow Country Park, Nowton Park

For the first time, Abbey Gardens was awarded a Green Flag Heritage Award



61

trees and 345 whips planted during 2025-26

Greenhouse gas emissions arising from West Suffolk Council activities

Target: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from West Suffolk Council activity to net zero by 2039. Measured in tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	
Baseline emissions 2010	8,215 tCO ₂ e
Annual emissions in 2025-26	5,181 tCO ₂ e

Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) is a 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 release (or avoiding the release) of different greenhouse gases against a common basis.

We include emissions that arise from buildings and transportation. This includes the leisure centres operated by Abbeycroft Leisure (ACL) and other operational buildings such as the Apex; it also includes buildings that we purchase energy for but excludes buildings that we own and are leased to local businesses who pay their own energy bills. The figures do not include the staff commuting journeys to our sites.

Total emissions are down 4.8 per cent compared to 2024-25, see Figure 2 below. There has been a 7.6 per cent decrease in emissions from council activity and a 0.6 per cent increase in emissions from Abbeycroft Leisure compared to 2024-25 – see Figure 3 on the next page. Finally, Figure 4 shows a breakdown of total emissions by source.

Figure 2 – Combined greenhouse gas emissions by year

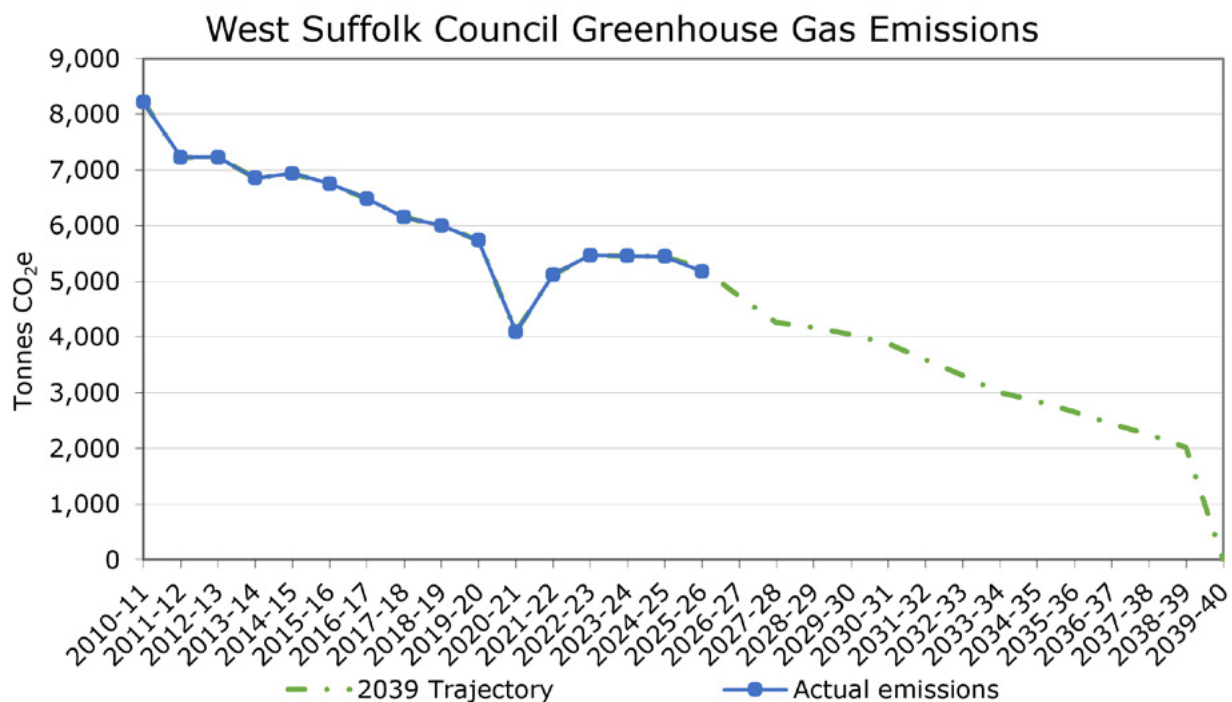


Figure 3 – Greenhouse gas emissions by organisation over time

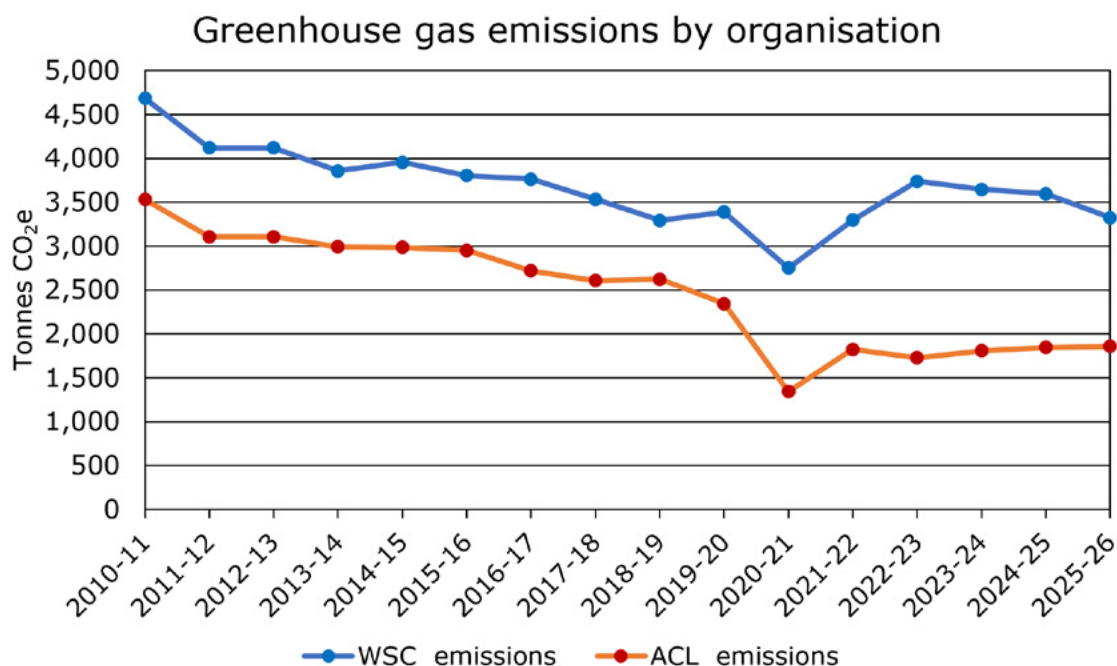
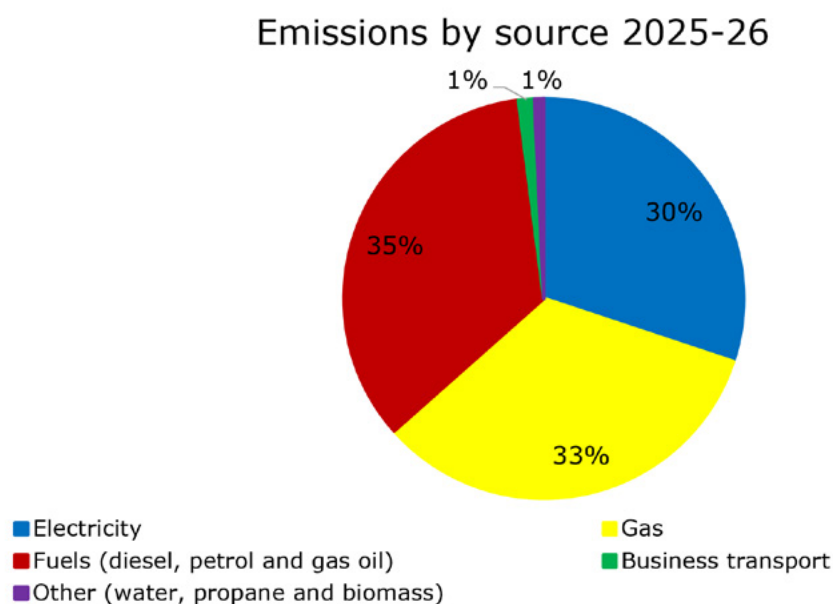


Figure 4 – Total greenhouse gas emissions by source



Notes

The long term 'decarbonisation' of grid electricity is a key component of the UK emissions reduction targets. Grid electricity consumed in the United Kingdom in 2025-26 has decreased in carbon intensity by 13 per cent compared to 2024-25. Appendix 1 shows a breakdown of emissions by reporting scope.



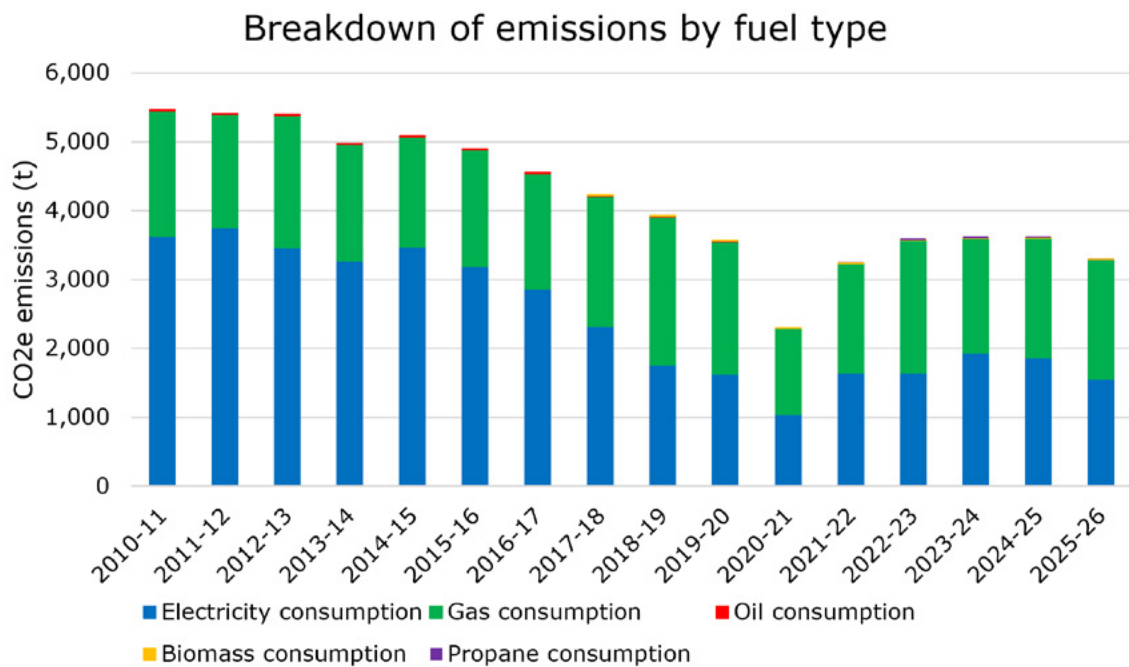
2. Building energy use

Target: remove fossil fuels from council property portfolio by 2039.

West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	
Emissions in 2010	5,436 tCO ₂ e
Emissions in 2025-26	3,301 tCO ₂ e

Emissions arising from all gas, electricity and biomass consumption are included in this section. Biomass is a fuel stock comprised of wood chips. Combined emissions from WSC and ACL buildings have decreased slightly. In comparison to 2024-25, total emissions from buildings are down by 9 per cent and are down 39.3 per cent compared to 2010. Figure 5 shows the overall decrease in emissions over time.

Figure 5 – Emissions from building utility consumption over time



During 2024-25 WSC was awarded Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero delivered by Salix Finance. £4.1 million has been awarded for decarbonisation projects at Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill leisure centres; a range of measures will be installed at the sites including solar PV canopies, various insulation measures and building management system upgrades. Works are progressing well at Bury leisure centre, with completion planned for October 2026 whilst Haverhill leisure centre is scheduled to complete in spring 2027.



Plant renewal and decarbonisation works

The Apex

Phase one of the work was completed in the summer of 2025, focusing on the decarbonisation element of the project. Kitchen and ventilation equipment supplied by gas was replaced with electrically powered appliances. The hot water provision for the whole of the building was also decarbonised, concluding with permanently switching off the gas supply in the autumn of 2025. Combined, these measures are expected to result in annual energy bill savings of £88,500, plus a carbon saving of 13.5 tonnes resulting from the gas removal.

The decarbonised plant room and new electric ovens



In addition, all the front of house lighting has been upgraded to LED technology which will save an additional £6,700 from the electricity bill each year

The next phase commenced in the spring of 2026 and includes replacement and efficiency upgrades for the rest of the heating, cooling and ventilation plant.



West Suffolk House

In 2025-26 this project progressed to Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 4 detailed design. The project will include the installation of low carbon heating alongside major plant and controls renewal and efficiency upgrades. A phased programme of work is expected to start in the summer of 2026 through to completion in summer 2027.

Abbey Gardens Toilets

Refurbishment of the Abbey Gardens toilets included decarbonisation of the building; replacing the gas boiler for an air source heat pump (ASHP) which provides hot water and heating services.

Athenaeum

The ballroom chandeliers at the Athenaeum have been fully restored and now upgraded to Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting technology.

Industrial Units

The council frequently carries out improvement works to our units whilst they are vacant before offering them back to the commercial market. Works carried out include:

- replacement of uninsulated asbestos cement roofs with fully insulated roofing,
- upgrading lights to LED technology,
- replacement windows and doors with double glazed units,
- removal of gas heaters and improving insulation in walls,
- and, where possible these units are fitted with solar panels prior to re-occupation

Units in the following locations have undergone refurbishments:

- two units on Highbury Road, Brandon
- one unit on Bunting Road, Bury St Edmunds
- one unit on Eastern Way, Bury St Edmunds
- three units on Craven Way, Newmarket
- one unit on Hampstead Avenue, Mildenhall
- three units on Hollands Road Haverhill

All of the above schemes are set to deliver:



Energy efficiency improvements



Reduced energy costs



Significantly reduced gas consumption (and for some sites, complete removal of gas)



Improved thermal comfort for occupants



Renewal of end of life or expired life systems

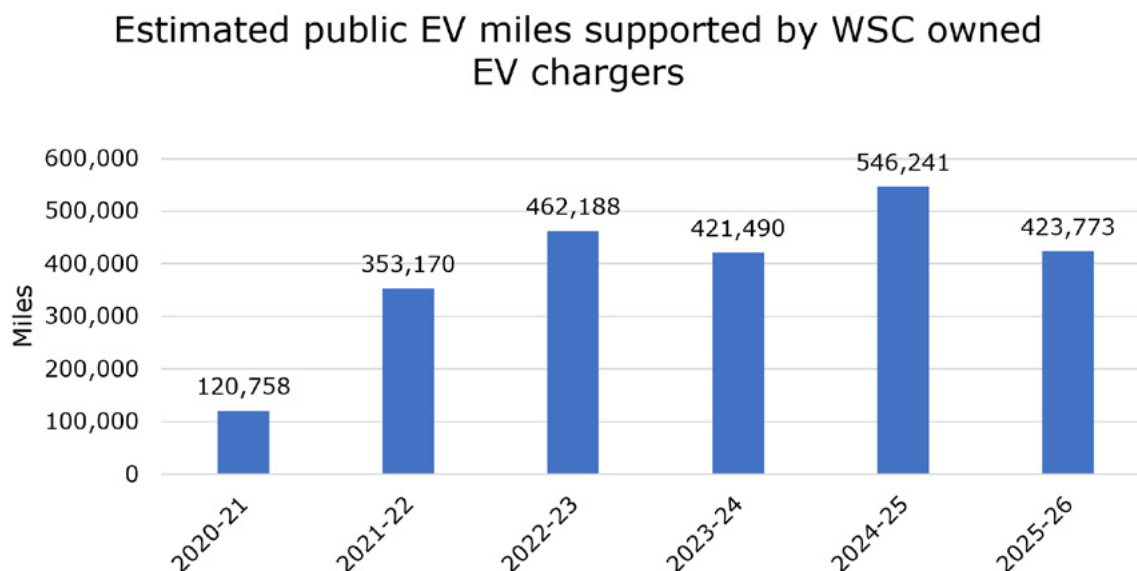


Deliverable programme with minimal disruption to all the stakeholders including public.

Electric vehicle charging

The cumulative number of EVs that can charge simultaneously using public charging infrastructure installed by WSC is 124 which supported an estimated 423,773 miles in battery electric vehicles as shown in Figure 6. This is the equivalent of driving from John O Groats to Lands End 703 times. The electricity provided to support public charging infrastructure in West Suffolk accounts for 30 tCO₂e.

Figure 6: Estimated public EV miles supported by WSC-owned EV chargers



New EV chargers at Chequers Square, Bury St Edmunds

During 2025-26, 46 new 11 kW chargers were installed across West Suffolk to aid residents without driveways in charging their EVs. These new chargers are being delivered by Suffolk County Council, working in partnership with West Suffolk Council, as part of a successful £5.3 million bid to the government's [Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(LEVI\) fund](#).

The council has [transferred its public EV chargers to a new network, FUUSE](#), which will improve flexibility and overall user experience for drivers. This update also introduces roaming capability, allowing drivers to use roaming apps that provide access to multiple chargers across different networks.



3. Renewable energy

Target: Increase the amount of renewable energy generated each year.

Renewable energy generated	
Baseline generation in 2012-13	300,220 kWh
Generation in 2025-26	1,159,284 kWh

The council has installed solar PV systems to reduce its electricity costs and carbon emissions. The energy generated by all systems installed on council offices, parks, cafés, depots, and leisure centres are totalled in this section.

The total capacity of the PV systems installed on West Suffolk Council property and leisure centres stands at 1,428 kilowatt peak (kWp) and they generated 1,162,107 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity during 2025-26, which is enough to power 325 average sized homes for the year. This figure is greater than last year because the additional PV systems at Newmarket Leisure Centre have now been generating electricity for over a year, so a full 12 months of generation data is included.

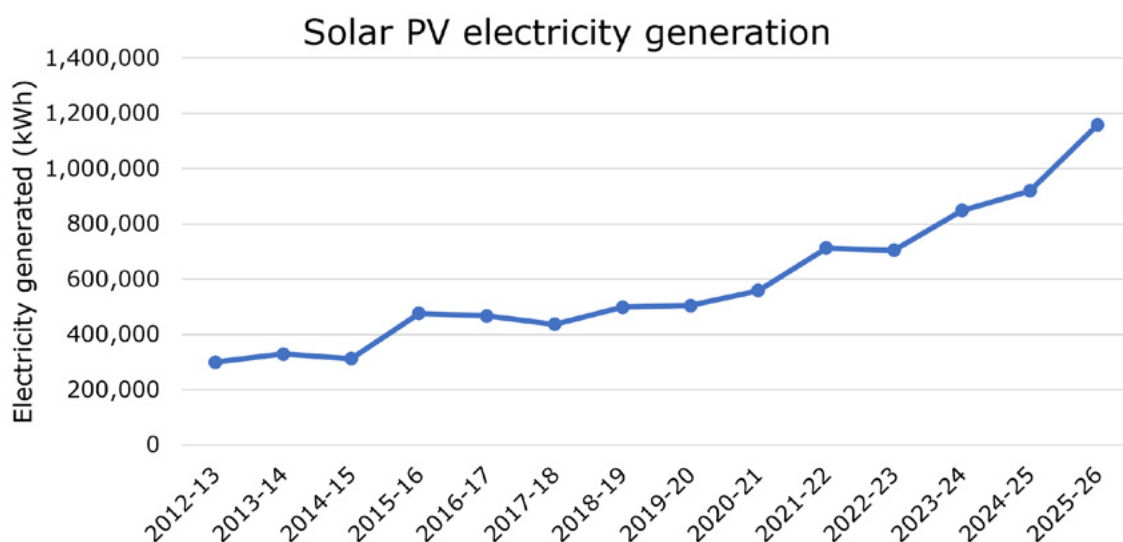
The rooftop solar installations generate revenue for the council through [Feed-in Tariff](#) payments and energy sales. In 2025-26, income from the council's solar installations totalled over £900,000.

Hollands Road, Haverhill

In 2025-26 the council installed a combined 43.2 kWp at council-owned business units on Hollands Road in Haverhill. The new installations are estimated to generate 38,880kWh and save 8 tCO₂e per annum.

Figure 7 below shows the amount of electricity generated per year which is increasing over time.

Figure 7 – Annual renewable electricity generation on council properties



We also install solar PV on third party buildings through the council's Solar for Business scheme. For more information see Section 10 on [page 29](#).



Toggam solar farm

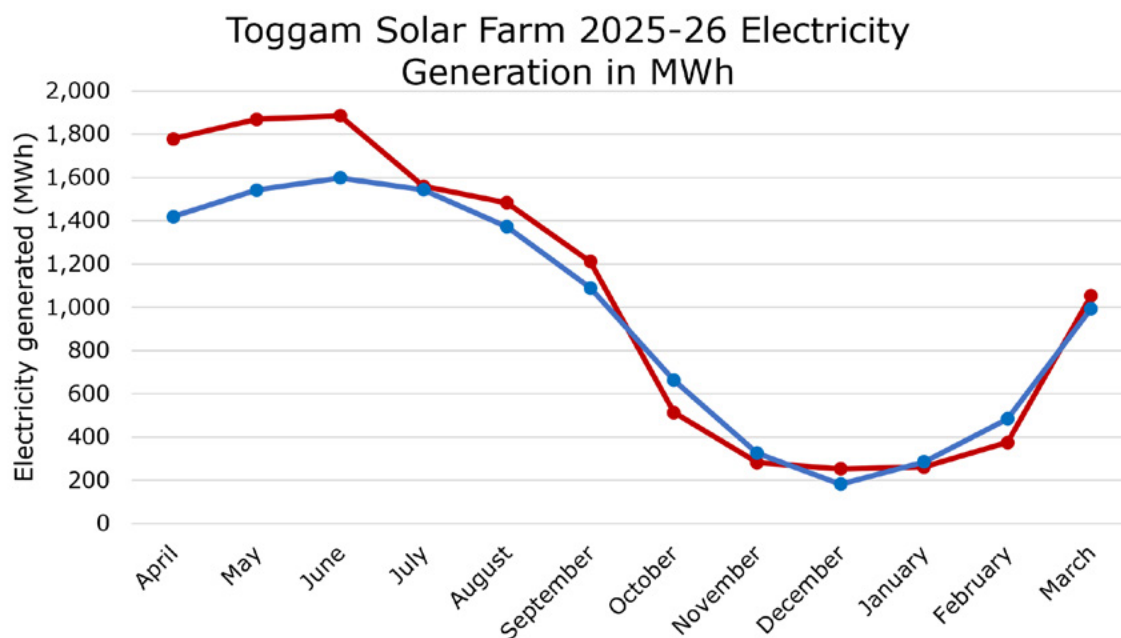


During 2025-26 the solar farm generated 12,526 megawatt hours (MWh) of renewable electricity which was 8.19 per cent above target for the year. Figure 8 shows the target electricity generation along with actual generation for Toggam Solar Farm in 2024-25.

The financial performance far exceeded the original business case due to the high value of electricity during this period. Since the purchase of the solar farm in 2016, £19.1m has been generated in energy sales, and the original investment of £14.3m was repaid in the summer of 2024. The original business case forecast a payback of 10 years, but this has been achieved in 8 years.

The electricity generated at the solar farm that is sold into the National Grid is enough to power around 3,509 homes and offset the carbon dioxide emissions from 1,595 cars.

Figure 8 – Chart showing electricity generation during 2025-26



Mildenhall Hub Solar Canopies

In 2025-26 work began on the [installation of new solar canopies](#) at the Hub, marking a significant step forward towards the site's sustainability. The project will see the construction of the solar canopies over parking bays which are designed to generate energy and provide sheltered parking for hub users.

Once completed, the canopies are expected to generate over £130,000 of electricity and save over 124 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. The project will not only reduce our energy bills but also provide protection against future grid price increases.

The project is exceeding biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements through provision of bird boxes, bat boxes, log piles, and tree planting, which will improve the ecological value of the site.

Solar PV lifecycle assessment statement

West Suffolk Council acknowledges that the production and disposal of renewable technology creates greenhouse gas emissions. In 2022, Willmott Dixon reported that the embodied carbon* of a solar photovoltaic (PV) installation is between 520-780 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent per kilowatt peak of solar power. When operational, a solar PV installation prevents an estimated 160 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent from being emitted, per kilowatt peak of solar power. The payback of solar PV in emissions terms is between 3 and 5 years, meaning a solar PV installation will generate significant net carbon savings during its lifetime of 25-40 years.

*Embodied Carbon: The greenhouse gas emissions released during the lifecycle of a product or system, including raw material extraction, transportation, manufacturing, maintenance, and eventual disposal.

Bury Rugby Club Case study:



**Bury Rugby Club
solar installation**

Date installed	December 2025
Embodied carbon	16,640 - 24,960 kgCO ₂ e
Annual carbon saving	5,100 kgCO ₂ e
Lifetime carbon saving (25 years)	127,500 kgCO ₂ e
Emissions payback	3.25 - 4.9 years
Net carbon saving	102,540 - 110,860 kgCO ₂ e



4. Fuel use

Target: Reduce the emissions from total fuel consumption from the baseline year in 2010.

Fuel use	
Consumption in 2019-20	773,431 litres
Consumption in 2025-26	711,507 litres

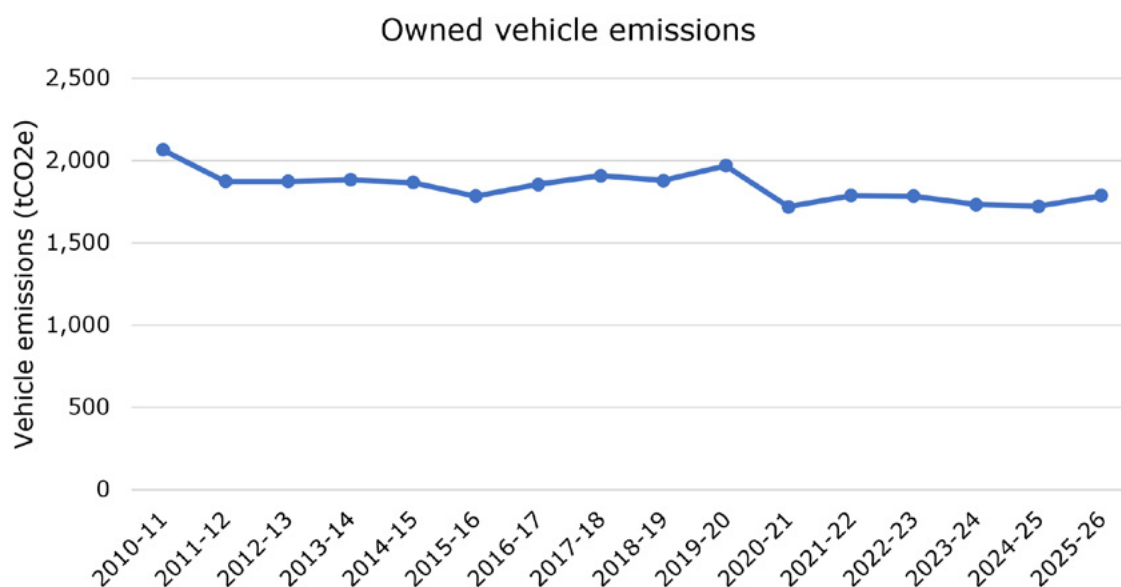
This section includes the total litres of fuel used in, but not limited to, refuse collection vehicles, road sweepers, grounds maintenance vehicles, petrol or diesel bought using fuel cards and industrial mobile machinery.

Total emissions from fuel use are 9 per cent below the baseline year of 2019-20 and up 4 per cent compared to 2024-25. Out-of-scope emissions from fuel use in 2025-26 totalled 96 tCO₂e. See Appendix 2 for more details on out-of-scope reporting.

The council's road registered electric fleet vehicles have travelled 81,952 miles during 2025-26, producing zero tailpipe emissions. Driving the electric vehicles has saved 16.2 tCO₂e compared to driving the same distance using similarly sized diesel equivalents. The miles driven by the council's EV fleet in 2025-26 also saved approximately £20,176 in diesel costs.

During 2025-26 we replaced 4 more road vehicles with EVs. We also have an EV food waste collection vehicle on order which is due for delivery in July 2026. This will support the rollout of Better Recycling whilst limiting the rise in fleet emissions associated with the increased service provision. Additionally, the new EV will improve air quality and reduce noise pollution for residents getting their food waste collected.

Figure 9 – Chart showing owned vehicle emissions by year



5. Business travel

Target: Reduce the amount of grey fleet miles from the baseline year in 2010. Grey fleet includes vehicles that are owned and used by council employees.

Distance travelled	
Baseline 2010	673,285 miles
Distance travelled in 2025-26	271,530 miles

Business travel includes staff and councillor journeys, pool car use and other owned or leased vehicles. Business travel has decreased 0.4 per cent compared to 2024-25, as shown in Figure 10 below, and the total miles travelled remains 60 per cent lower than the 2010 baseline. Business travel contributed 65.1 tCO₂e to the council's total emissions. During 2025-26, 12.8 per cent of total staff mileage claims were for journeys taken in a pure electric vehicle and the council aims to increase this percentage over time. Appendix 1 contains a breakdown of the total claims by vehicle fuel type.

Although the council doesn't own the vehicles used for business mileage, it is responsible for the emissions created from business activity. These emissions are reported in scope three. Appendix 2 contains more details on emissions scopes. The continued use of agile working and technology such as Microsoft Teams has helped to keep staff mileage lower than pre pandemic levels. The council will continue to use these arrangements, helping to minimise emissions from business travel.

Figure 10 – Chart showing business passenger miles travelled



Public transport

Staff used public transport to cover 25,805 miles during 2025-26 which was 103 per cent higher than last year. Use of public transport produced 1,673 kgCO₂e during 2025-26.



6. Water consumption

Target: Reduce the amount of water used in council activities from the baseline year in 2010.

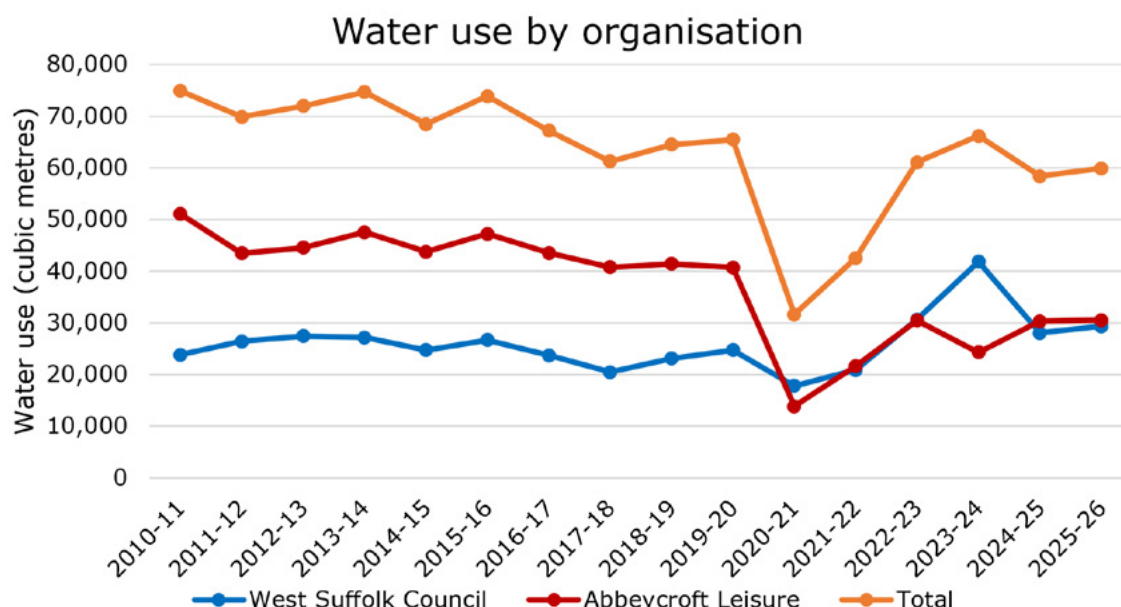
Organisation	Water consumption (m3)	
	2010 (baseline)	2025-26
West Suffolk Council	23,827	29,330
Abbeycroft Leisure	51,076	30,554
Total	74,903	59,884

This section includes the total of water consumption from all WSC owned and operated properties, as well as those run by ACL. Total water consumption contributed 22tCO₂e during 2025-26.

Total water consumption has decreased by 20 per cent compared to the 2010 baseline and consumption has increased by 3 per cent compared to 2024-25.

This is comprised of a 5 per cent increase in water consumption for WSC driven by the council taking possession of five additional sites. In 2026-27, the council will strive to improve the quality of water consumption data through implementation of automatic meter reading (AMR) software at our high consumption sites. Figure 11 shows the change in total water consumption over time and by organisation. The council continues to install water saving taps that started with publicly accessible sites to reduce water consumption.

Figure 11 – Chart showing total water consumption by year



7. Office waste

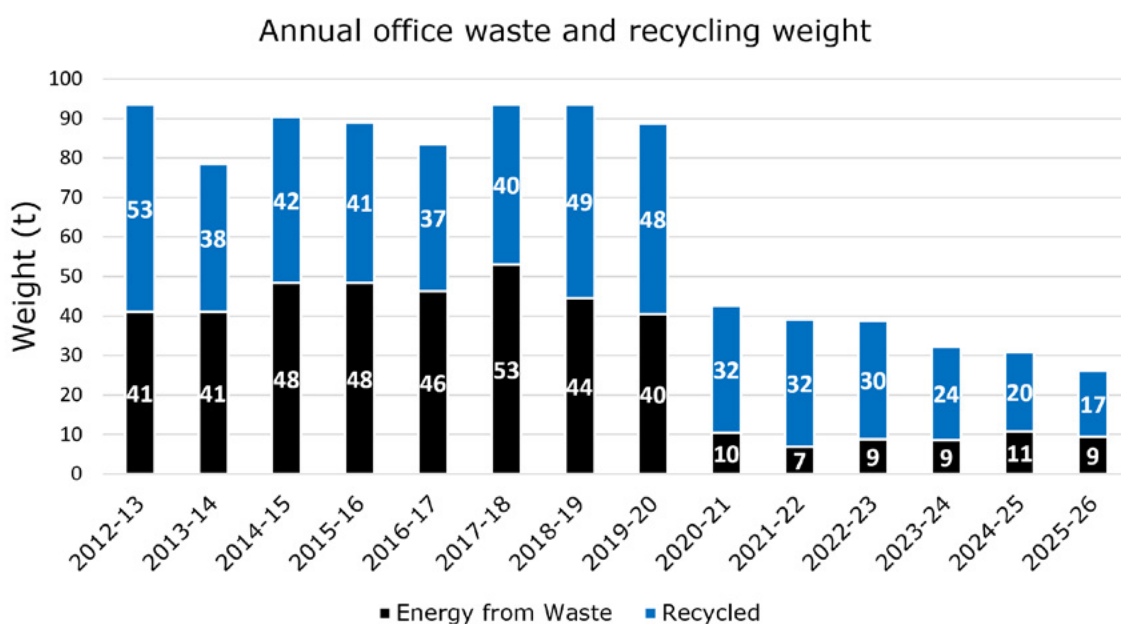
Target: To increase the office waste recycling rate and decrease the total waste arising from council operations from the baseline year 2018.

Waste arisings	Tonnes (t) or percentage
Baseline 2018	93.53 t
Waste arisings in 2025-26	26.18 t
Recycling rate 2025-26	64.02 per cent

During 2025-26, the total amount of waste generated was 26.18 tonnes. Of this, residual waste accounted for 9.42 tonnes and recycling was 16.76 tonnes. In 2026-27, the council will be updating office bins and signage to comply with [Better Recycling](#). It is anticipated that this will help divert more waste from being sent to the Energy from Waste (EfW) centre.

Figure 12 shows the proportion of waste recycled compared to that sent to EfW each year. EfW aims to move waste up the waste hierarchy, unlocking useful electricity from waste which would otherwise have gone to landfill. More information on the Suffolk EfW facility can be found at [Suffolk EfW](#).

Figure 12 – Chart showing annual office waste and recycling weights



Office printing

In 2025-26, 730,227 pages were printed. This is a 12 per cent increase from 2024-25. Despite this, the overall downward trend remains, and this year's pages printed was 62 per cent lower than 2018-19. The overall decrease in office printing can be seen in Figure 13.

Figure 13 – Chart showing number of pages printed per year



8. Biodiversity and parks

Target: Maintain or increase the number of green flag accredited sites compared to the baseline year 2016.

Green flag status

The following sites successfully retained Green Flag accreditation during 2025-26:

- Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds
- Aspal Close, Mildenhall
- Brandon Country Park, Brandon
- East Town Park, Haverhill
- Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds
- West Stow Country Park, Bury St Edmunds

For the first time, Abbey Gardens was also awarded a Green Flag Heritage Award. More information on Green Flag Awards can be found at [Green Flag Award](#).



The Green Flag judges visits to Abbey Gardens and Nowton Park

Britain in Bloom awards

West Suffolk towns Brandon and Bury St Edmunds achieved national success in the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom competition. Britain in Bloom saw Brandon in Bloom CIC (community interest company) win the gold award in the town category and Bury St Edmunds in Bloom earn the gold award in the large town category.

For more information about Britain in Bloom, visit: [RHS - Britain in Bloom](#)



Tree planting

61 standard trees and 345 whips were planted in 2025-26. Some of the new trees planted at West Suffolk House, Brandon Country Park, and Nowton Park can be seen in these photos.



The Arboricultural Team planted trees at the cemeteries in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, which added some nice spring colour to the sites.



Black Poplar Project at Nowton Park

The Nowton Park Ranger Team have been working with the Suffolk Tree Wardens to propagate cuttings of the rare Suffolk Black Poplar clone. This iconic Suffolk tree is famous for being represented in John Constable's painting 'The Haywain'. The Black Poplar saplings will be planted out in selected locations within Suffolk as part of the national 250-year celebrations of the birth of the Suffolk-born artist. The black poplar is one of Britain's most endangered native trees, with only a few thousand mature specimens remaining. They are known for their ability to grow quickly and absorb carbon dioxide efficiently and therefore contribute to the broader goal of creating a sustainable environment in the face of climate change.



This year at Nowton Park, the team spotted an impressive group of 15 ducklings. Ducks contribute greatly to ecosystem health through pest control, nutrient cycling, seed dispersal, and water quality improvement.

Half Moon Park, Mildenhall

Bulbs were mechanically planted over a 67 square meter area at Half Moon Park, Mildenhall. A Bee Surprise Mix was used, which will support bees and other pollinators as an early nectar source when bees first come out of hibernation. Pollen and nectar-rich flowers provide the best feeding opportunities for bees to thrive.



Improvement projects undertaken in Brandon Country Park

In the woodland area behind the walled garden the Ranger Team & Park Volunteers used self-seeded bamboo and coppiced hazel from around the park to construct a hide area. Local children contributed by making and donating bird boxes, and we created a natural log pile from storm debris, which has already become home to a resident field mouse, as well as an abundance of insects and other small creatures. The hide area will improve visitor experience at the park and the new habitats created will support local wildlife.



The team also worked on the clearance and rejuvenation of overgrown Laurel hedges, which will encourage fresh new growth and maintain the density and health of the hedges.



The pond in the walled garden has been restored, improving the habitat for a diverse range of species including insects, birds, and plants. The restored pond has also enhanced the aesthetic appeal of the area. Wood chippings have been reused entirely on site to improve pathways and enhance habitats.



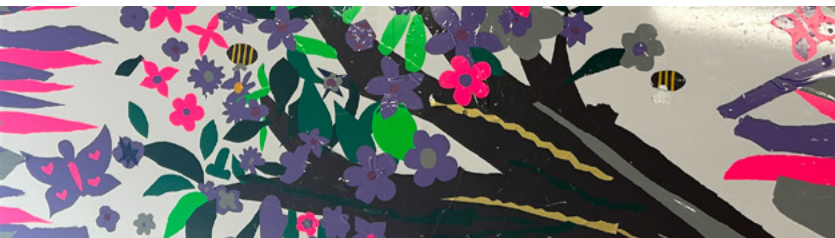
Haverhill Meadows

The council have continued to manage and maintain the meadows in Haverhill, and this year we have been gifted with growth of pyramid orchids, bee orchids, oxeye daisies, and crested cow-wheat.



East Town Park Visitor Centre, Haverhill

Students from Castle Manor Academy in Haverhill have refreshed the artwork panels that decorate the wall of the East Town Park Visitor Centre. This was a fantastic project to incite creativity and inspire the next generation to care for nature.



Margaret Wilkin Winter Display, Abbey Gardens



The new Margaret Wilkin Winter Display was opened in the Abbey Gardens. Funded from a bequeathment from Dr Wilkin, the display was designed by the Abbey Gardens Manager Simon Hobson to provide winter colour through sustainable planting. It was planted by the Abbey Gardens Friends working with the gardening team. Winter gardens are essential for wildlife survival during the harsh winter months, as they provide crucial sources of food and shelter for various creatures.

Wildflower Labyrinth, Abbey Gardens



The new interactive feature at Abbey Gardens invites visitors to follow the path of the labyrinth at a pace that feels right for them. The labyrinth is a grass path through wildflowers which will change with the seasons. There are no wrong turns, and just one way in and out. Labyrinths have been part of many spiritual traditions since ancient times, with the twists and turns reflecting an individual's journey through life. The Wildflower Labyrinth received the accolade of 'Best Gardening for Wildlife' at the Anglia in Bloom awards.

Bury Water Meadows Group

Working in partnership with the Bury Water Meadows Group, volunteer work parties have taken place throughout the year with activities including ditch clearance, meadow scything, vegetation and invasive species removal and path maintenance. Scything is a traditional method of managing meadows, and is an eco-friendly alternative to using heavy machinery and chemicals which can cause soil degradation and limit growth of native fauna and flora.



Biodiversity duty reporting

The West Suffolk Biodiversity Duty Report was published 13 March 2026 and outlines the policies and actions the council has taken to meet its biodiversity duties and improve the district's environmental resilience. The report documents how West Suffolk Council supports wildlife, enhances habitats, and integrates biodiversity into its work, whilst also highlighting the wider challenges affecting the environment.

Among the report's key findings is the West Suffolk Local Plan 2024 to 2041, that was adopted in 2025, contains nine policies seeking to restore and enhance the natural environment and reverse the decline of biodiversity. The report from February 2024 to January 2026 also identified that 90 protected species were found at Aspal Close, Beck Row a council owned and maintained site.

Further findings in the report reveal that park volunteers that help the council to maintain country parks and gardens contributed 11,146 hours of their time from 2024 to 2025.

The report sets out that the council is committed to working in partnership with local and national organisations to achieve restoration and biodiversity net gain objectives, as well as ecosystem services through a Suffolk-wide green infrastructure strategy.

For the full report, please visit: [West Suffolk Biodiversity Duty Reporting Report](#)

9. Environmental compliance



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

Target date: Ongoing

The council continues to maintain environmental permits for two operational sites located in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, which are used to support the strategic management of West Suffolk's municipal waste. The Environment Agency carried out regulatory inspections and reported there have been no compliance issues, breaches of the permit conditions or any action required by them in any aspects of the requirements.

We have embraced the challenges for implementing Better Recycling to meet the central government reforms on waste collections in England. We have purchased new fleet vehicles, delivered additional bins and caddies to households and carried out site modifications to successfully provide the new waste collection services from 1 June 2026.



10. Community outreach

The initiatives and projects outlined below do not contribute to the reduction of the council's emissions. Instead, they generate emissions reductions for West Suffolk as an area, as well as additional co-benefits such as cheaper energy bills, community resilience, economic growth, and healthier residents.

Solar for Business

Over 110 local businesses are currently signed up to the scheme and benefiting from lower energy bills. In 2025-26 a total of 503kWp of new solar capacity was installed, bringing the total capacity installed under the Solar for Business scheme to 9,007 kWp. This is not included in our carbon accounting, as the electricity is consumed by third parties, so the businesses themselves can improve their own carbon footprints. Solar for Business generated an estimated £693,311 of income for the council in 2025-26.



Solar installation at Wrightfield

Decarbonisation Initiatives Fund

In 2025-26, £56,372.67 of funding was awarded to community groups to implement decarbonisation measures at their premises, such as village halls and recreation ground pavilions. Measures installed include:

- Solar panels
- Battery storage
- Insulation
- LED lighting
- Air source heat pumps

The Honington & Sapiston Village Hall was one of the premises to receive funding. They used their grant to install a 24kWp solar PV system with an 11kWh battery, which will save 4 tonnes of carbon per year.



Solar installation at Honington & Sapiston Village Hall

Recycling Initiatives

The recycling-on-the-go initiative saw 24 new bins installed in busy areas of Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Mildenhall in May 2025, with the aim to encourage residents to dispose of recyclable items, such as plastic bottles and cans, while they are out in public. The bins have collected large volumes of recyclable material, with a 95 per cent capture rate of plastic bottles and cans. The bins saw an 87 per cent reduction of recyclable materials in the general waste bins, suggesting residents and visitors are making full use of the bins and making the choice to recycle and keep their towns clean and litter-free.



The council continued to support innovative approaches to recycling and waste reduction. Reverse vending machines located in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Newmarket collected 10,122 containers between April 2025 and April 2026. Since the scheme commenced, more than 32,000 drinks containers have been recycled and over 1,160 kilograms of carbon emissions have been saved.

Through funding secured from Material Focus, the council installed 18 electrical recycling banks across the district. Between January and March 2026, almost 18 tonnes of electrical waste were collected for recycling.

Better Recycling

We have delivered 41 engagement events to promote and help residents understand the newly rolled out Better Recycling scheme. The events took place in various locations across West Suffolk, including:

- Schools
- Libraries
- Markets
- Coffee mornings
- Adult interest groups
- Supermarkets
- Independent living flats

Clements Community Centre hosted an engagement event during their weekly Monday Club and said, "everybody learnt something and they talked about it until they went home". On top of this, individual visits have been arranged to assist residents who struggle with recycling due to their circumstances. We have plenty more events planned during 2026-27.



Solar Together

Through this scheme in partnership with Suffolk County Council, we have facilitated 31 domestic solar and battery installations in West Suffolk in 2025-26. An additional 3 homes also chose to retrofit a battery storage system. This equates to an annual carbon saving of 24 tonnes. The next phase is going live in summer 2026 and will include the option for residents to switch to low carbon heating with an ASHP installation.

Warm Homes

During 2025-26, the Warm Homes: Local Grant saw 15 West Suffolk properties approved for retrofitting. The retrofit assessment voucher scheme had a funding pot of £240,000 from Suffolk Public Sector Organisations and offered Suffolk residents a free retrofit assessment if their property is less than 98m². 19% of the assessments were completed for West Suffolk residents.



The 2025 [cohort of interns worked on a group project](#) throughout the summer with the aim of promoting grants and other areas of support to help residents improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The interns discovered the prominent barriers for residents wanting to access grants to improve domestic energy efficiency included age, income, and living in a listed building or housing association property.

The 2025 interns at a market day

Coming up in 2026-27, the West Suffolk Low Interest Loan will be launching in July, and we will begin delivering our brand-new Landlord Retrofit HUB to assist landlords in improving their properties to meet the new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) by 2030.

Building Resilience and Nutrition (BRAN) Fund

The BRAN Fund has been created from £90,000 given by Suffolk public sector leaders and is being delivered by West Suffolk Council in partnership with Community Action Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. Through this fund, the council has awarded funding for an edible forest, a school allotment project, and community food growing projects. These projects will help people out of food poverty, improve health and nutrition, and reduce food waste.

Newmarket Chalk Stream

A locality budget payment was awarded to Newmarket Chalk Streams CIC to run a sampling and citizen science project to gain a greater understanding of the Newmarket Brook. The project aims to identify pollution hotspots and sources and run regular litter picks to minimize pollution and improve the chalk stream's health.

To keep up to date with the council's environmental work year-round, check out [Environmental news](#).

Appendix 1

Figure 14 shows the breakdown of mileage claims by vehicle fuel type.

Figure 14 - Total mileage claims by fuel type

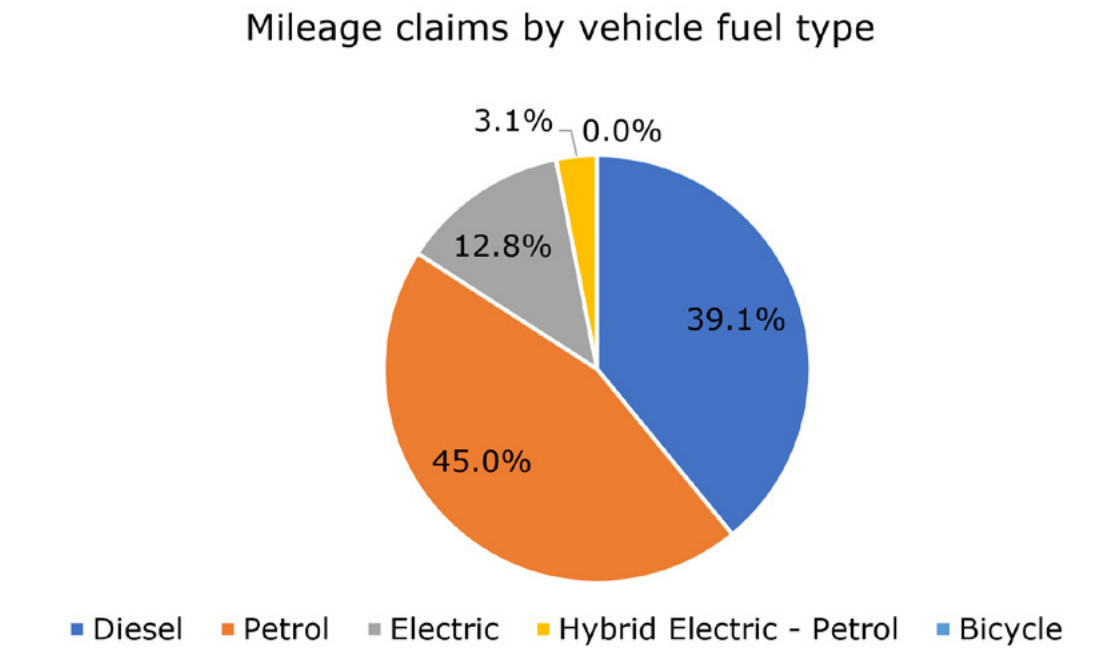


Figure 15 shows how the fuel mix of WSC staff mileage claims is changing over time.

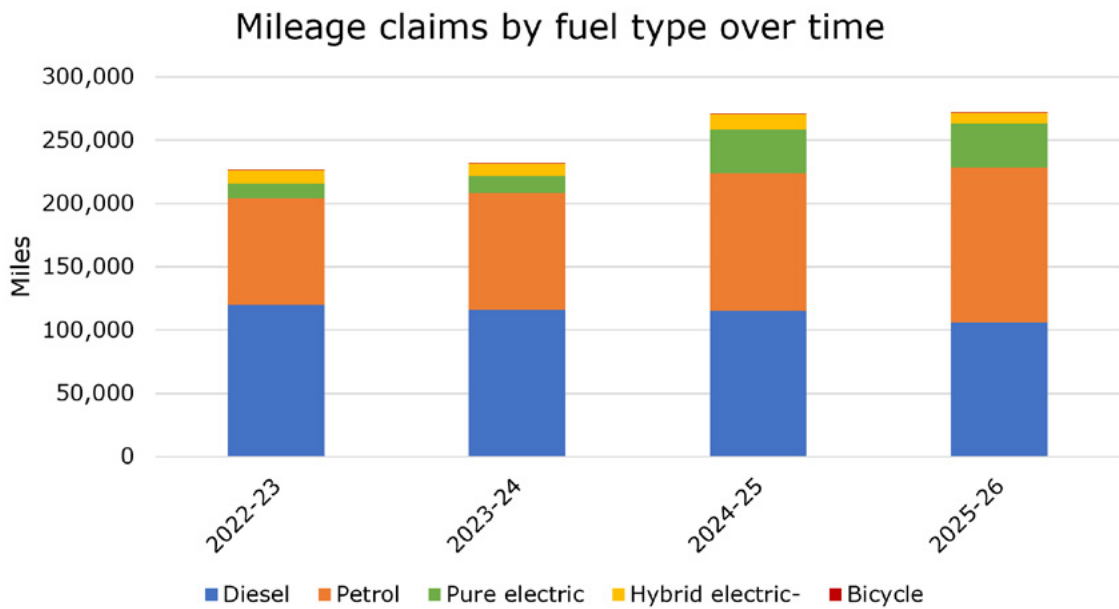


Figure 15: Mileage claims by fuel type over time



Appendix 2

Emissions scopes

Figure 16 shows the total greenhouse gas emissions by reporting scope. The greatest proportion of emissions originates from Scope 1, referred to as direct emissions; this includes emissions from the consumption of gas and owned transport. Table 2 details where each source of emissions sits within the reporting framework.

Emissions by scope 2025-26

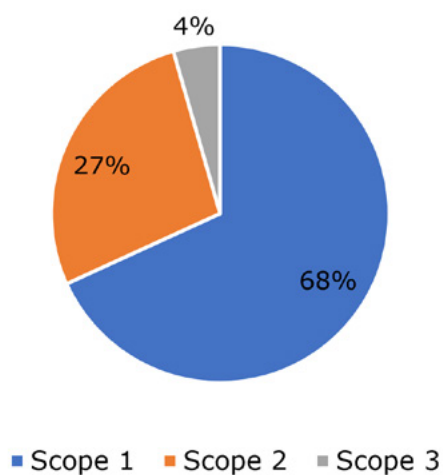


Figure 16 – Total emissions by reporting scope

Table 2 – Sources of emissions by scope

Emissions scopes	Activity	Emissions
Scope 1 – direct emissions Emissions from the activities of an organisation or under its control.	• WSC gas consumption • WSC owned transport • WSC propane • ACL gas consumption • ACL biomass	3,532tCO ₂ e
Scope 2 – indirect emissions Emissions from electricity or other energy purchased and used by the organisation. These emissions are created during the production of the energy by another before they are used by the organisation.	• WSC purchased electricity • ACL purchased electricity	1,417tCO ₂ e
Scope 3 – all other indirect emissions All other indirect emissions from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that it does not own or control. The council currently only reports key Scope 3 emissions sources.	• WSC purchased electricity transmission and distribution • ACL purchased electricity transmission and distribution • WSC public transport • WSC water consumption and treatment • ACL water consumption and treatment • WSC staff and councillor mileage in personal vehicles	232tCO ₂ e
Total emissions		5181tCO₂e
Emissions per resident Resident population: 188,485 Data source: Suffolk Observatory		27.49kgCO ₂ e/ resident
Out of scope Direct carbon dioxide impact of burning biomass and biofuels where the Scope 1 impact of these fuels has been determined to be net zero – since the fuel source itself absorbs an equivalent amount of CO ₂ e during the growth phase as the amount of CO ₂ e released through combustion.	• WSC fuel consumption with average biofuel blend • WSC biomass use • ACL biomass use	175tCO ₂ e

Notes

- Total emissions for Mildenhall Hub have been accounted for in this statement. This method brings the emissions reporting in line with other multioccupancy buildings operated by the council.
- Calculations include floor area apportionment for gas at Mildenhall Hub to allocate emissions to Abbeycroft Leisure. Electricity and water consumption has been calculated using recharge billing data.
- WSC gas and electricity consumption has increased since the 2019-20 baseline. This is primarily driven by the opening of Mildenhall Hub in June 2021, which uses an average of 1,573,000kWh of gas and 1,648,000kWh of electricity per year.
- Calculations use estimated data for electricity at the George Lambton Pavilion (Newmarket), and water at Haverhill Depot due to unavailable metering and billing data.
- The council is working to secure accurate data where omitted, and the environmental statement will be updated once data becomes available.

West Suffolk

Council

