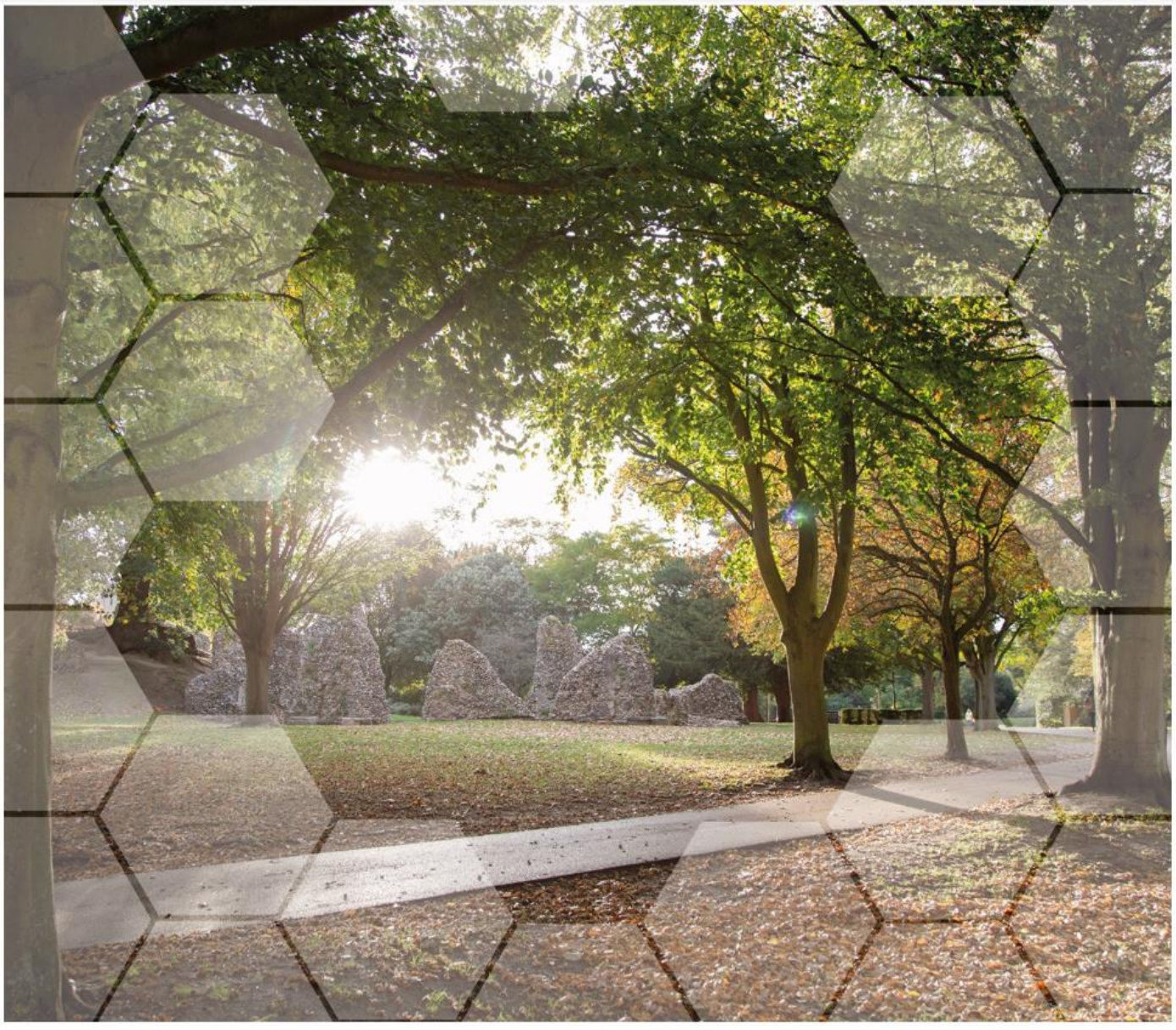
West Suffolk Council

Environmental Statement

2019-20



1. Introduction

This report summarises the outcome of the activities West Suffolk Council (WSC) undertook to manage and reduce its environmental impact during the year ending 31 March 2020.

After the declaration of an Environment and Biodiversity Emergency in West Suffolk in September 2019, West Suffolk Council launched an Environment and Climate Task Force to evaluate current progress and develop new avenues to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with current aspirations. In June 2020 the council confirmed that it would begin utilising carbon budgets to track its emissions reduction performance towards a net zero emissions by 2030 target. This new target is set out in Figure 1 on page 3.

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

The report is structured by theme with highlights set out below. For ease, each icon contains a hyperlink to the relevant section of the report.

2. Overview of environmental performance during 2019-20

Emissions down 30% compared to 2010
Down 4.5% compared to the previous year

Renewable energy generated up 68% compared to 2012
Up 1% compared to last year

Commercial fleet fuel use down 10% compared to 2010
Down 3% compared to last year

Business travel down 34% compared to 2010
Up 1% comparred to last year

Water consumption down 13% compared to 2010
Up 1% compared to last year

Total office waste is down 5% compared to 2012
Recycled 4% more waste (54.40%) and total waste is down 5% compared to last year

Retained 5 Green Flag status parks helping to maintain biodiversity

3. Greenhouse gas emissions arising from West Suffolk Council activities

Target: reduce greenhouse gas emissions from West Suffolk Council activity to net zero by 2030. Measured in Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO_2e).

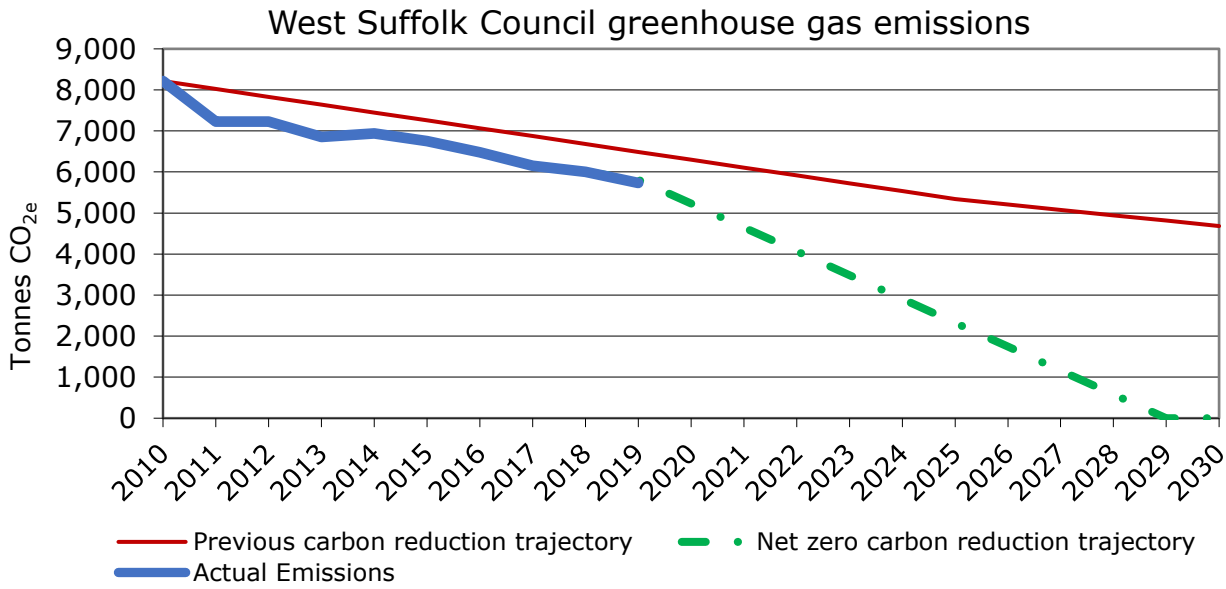
West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	
Baseline emissions 2010	8,215 tonnes CO_2e
Annual emissions in 2019-2020	5,733 tonnes CO_2e

Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) 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 releasing (or avoiding releasing) 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 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.

The combined emissions from WSC and Abbeycroft Leisure (ACL) activity has continued to decrease, during 2019-20 emissions decreased by 4.5% to the previous year - see Figure 1 below. Of this total there has been a 0.5% decrease in emissions from WSC activity and a 10.7% decrease in emissions from Abbeycroft Leisure - see Figure 2 on the next page.

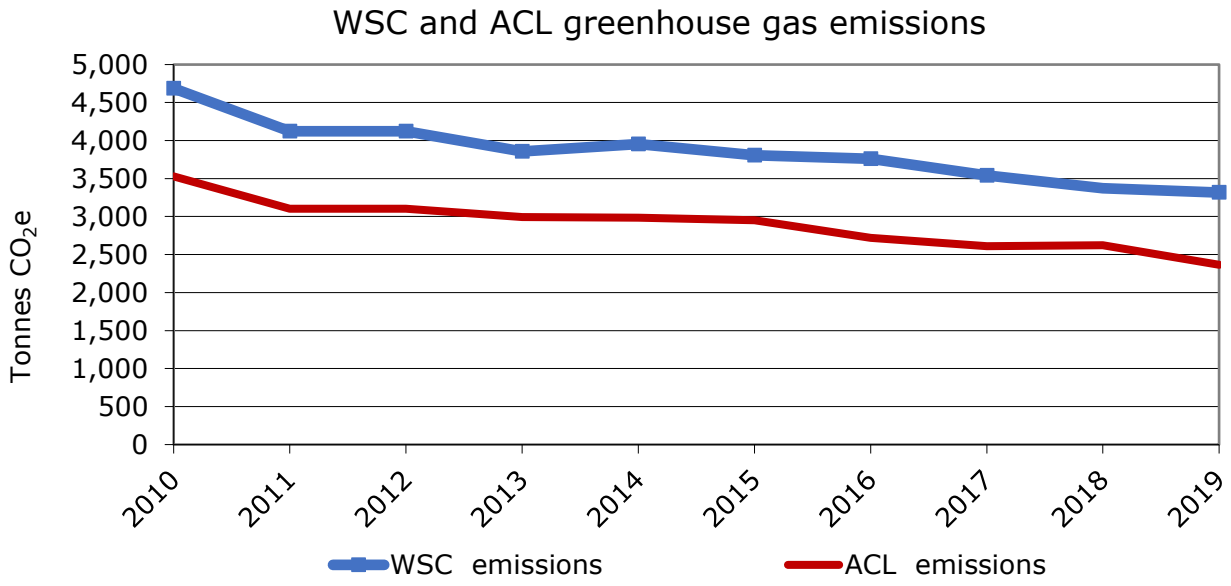
Figure 1 Combined greenhouse gas emissions by year



This is the first year that we have included emissions arising from the combustion of biomass fuel for heating, this data has been entered retrospectively for previous years as data is now more accurate and consistent.

Figure 2 shows a trend of decreasing emissions over time from both WSC and ACL where emissions from ACL are less than WSC.

Figure 2 Greenhouse gas emissions by organisation over time



3.1 Emissions target and progress

As WSC operations continue to develop and grow, so do the challenges relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts. By working more effectively across services we are improving monitoring and reporting of consumption and emissions data as well as the activities to manage and reduce them.

Key changes noted during the year were as follows:

- Emissions from ACLs gas consumption have decreased by 12.3% compared to the previous year
- Biomass emissions for WSC and ACL have increased by 1.2% and 8.2% respectively
- The use of heating oil at West Stow Country Park has resulted in a small increase in emissions of 0.4% compared to 2018-19
- Emissions from grid supplied electricity to WSC properties have fallen by 7.8% compared to the previous year (See decarbonisation note below and relevant emissions source sections as set out below)
- Emissions released due to the WSCs water use have increased by 7.2% compared to the previous year.

Notes

The gradual 'decarbonisation' of grid electricity is a key component of the UK emissions reduction targets. Emissions arising from grid supplied electricity dropped by 10% in 2019 compared to 2018 data. Appendix 1 contains information on emissions reporting scopes.

4. Building energy use

Target: to meet the net zero emissions target we will reduce energy consumption from buildings operated in 2019-20 by 50% by 2025.

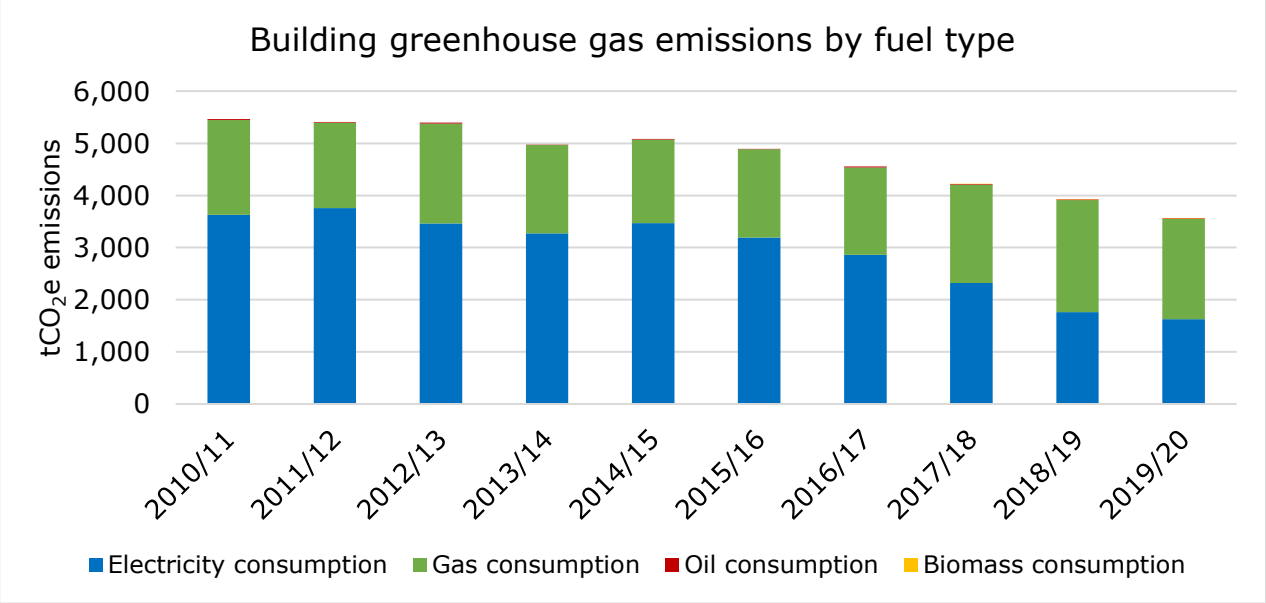
West Suffolk Council and Abbeycroft Leisure	
Emissions in 2010	5,436 tonnes CO2e
Emissions in 2019-20	3,567 tonnes CO_2e

Combined emissions from WSC and ACL buildings have continued to decrease following previous years. In comparison to 2018-19, total emissions from buildings are down by 9.2% and down by 34.4% compared to 2010. **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.** shows the decrease in emissions over time.

The decrease in emissions is a result of a reduction in total gas emissions of 10.7%, a reduction in electricity emissions of 7.6% and a small increase in oil emissions of 0.4%. Emissions arising from biomass consumption also increased contributing an additional 1.5 tonnes CO_2e.

It should be noted that electrical energy consumed in WSC buildings increased by 2% over this period due to the acquisition of new buildings including West Suffolk Operational Hub, Vicon House, Palace Coach House.

Figure 3 Emissions from building utility consumption over time



Some notable property projects this year which have contributed to the above changes include:

- West Suffolk House – Lower energy LED lighting through the whole of the ground floor, stairwells, conference chamber and external building lighting
- Athenaeum – More efficient boilers and enhanced boiler controls
- de-commissioning of the former Olding Road Depot
- industrial unit roof covering and factory lighting upgrades 21 Putney Close Brandon

- industrial unit roof covering 21, 22, 23 and 24 James Carter Road Mildenhall (ongoing) and solar PV installation
- Palace House Coach House commercial site energy efficient lighting and Palace House Coach House Cottage conversion together with thermal upgrades.
- Jubilee walk public toilets LED lighting upgrade.

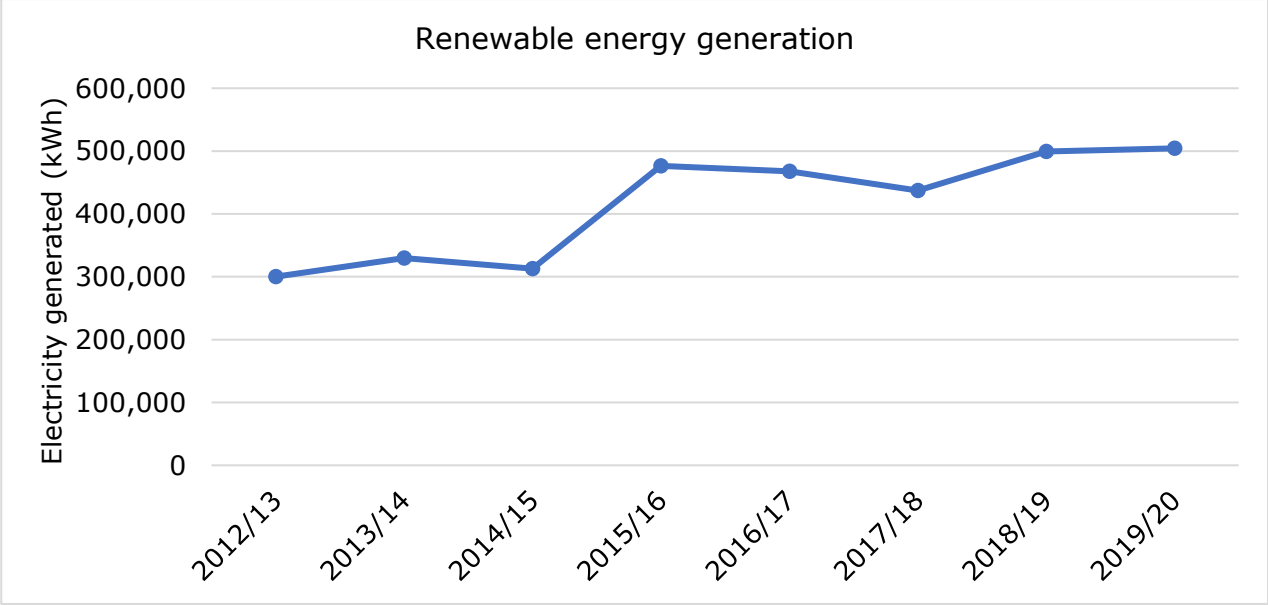
5. Renewable energy

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

Renewable energy generated	
Baseline generation in 2012-13	300,220kWh
Generation in 2019-20	504,364kWh

The solar photovoltaic systems installed on WSC owned property (offices, depots, and leisure centres) generated 504,364kWh of electricity during 2019-20. This is enough to power 142 average sized homes for the year – more than previous years. Figure 4 below shows the amount of electricity generated by year, other than troughs in 2014-15 and 2017-18 this is generally increasing over time.

Figure 4 Annual renewable electricity generation on council properties



5.1 Renewable heat

The council has also previously installed ground source heat pumps in West Suffolk House and The Apex in Bury St Edmunds that provide low carbon heat using ground temperatures and a heat pump.

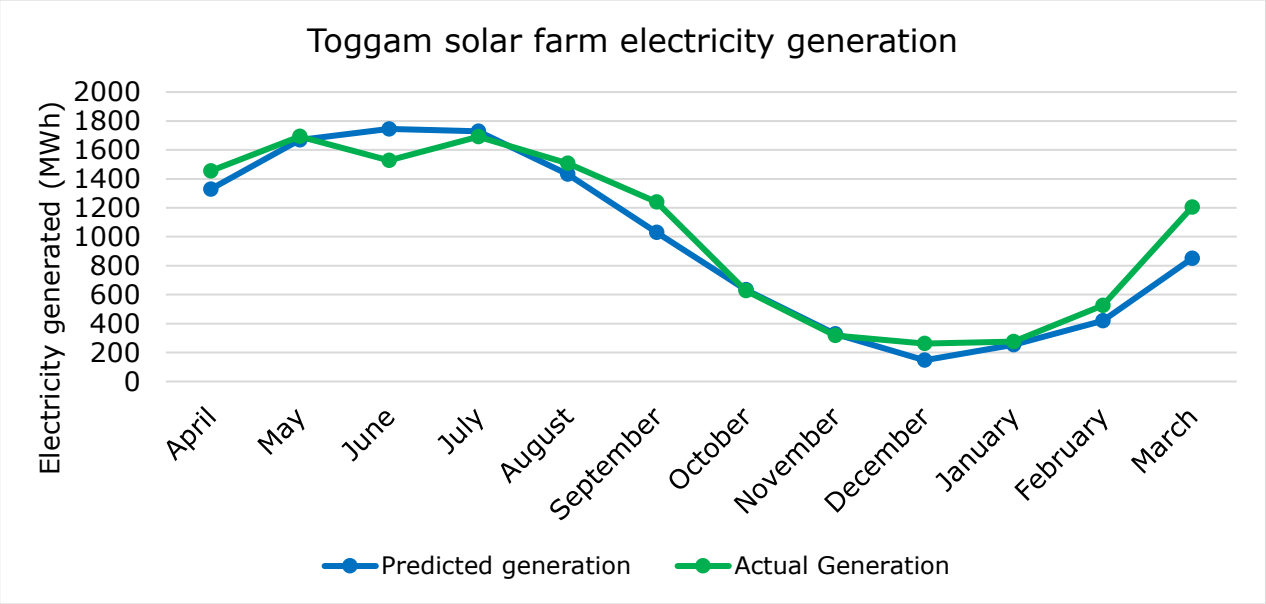
WSC has also installed a Biomass wood chip boiler at The National Horse Racing Museum which provides the majority of heat for the site from wood chip produced locally and supplied by the Jockey Club Estates.

5.2 Toggam solar farm

2019-20 was another good year for electricity generation at the solar farm. Toggam Solar Farm generated 12,328MWh of electricity compared to a target of 11,595MWh, this equates to a 6.6% uplift. The electricity that is sold into the National Grid is enough to power around 3,300 homes and offset the carbon dioxide emissions from 1,500 cars. The value of the electricity was higher than expected during this year and

the site generated £1.6 million of income. Figure 5 below shows the target electricity generation along with actual generation for Toggam Solar Farm.

Figure 5 Chart showing electricity generation during 2019-20



6. Commercial vehicle fuel use

Target: Reduce the emissions from commercial vehicle operation from the baseline year in 2010.

Fuel use	
Baseline year consumption 2010	620,442 litres
Consumption in 2019-20	558,394 litres

Commercial vehicle fuel consumption has decreased by 3% during 2019-20 compared to the previous year. These vehicles include refuse collection trucks, road sweepers, grounds maintenance vehicles, petrol or diesel bought using fuel cards, and industrial mobile machinery. Figure 6 below shows the decrease in consumption this year and a general stable trend in fuel consumption over time.

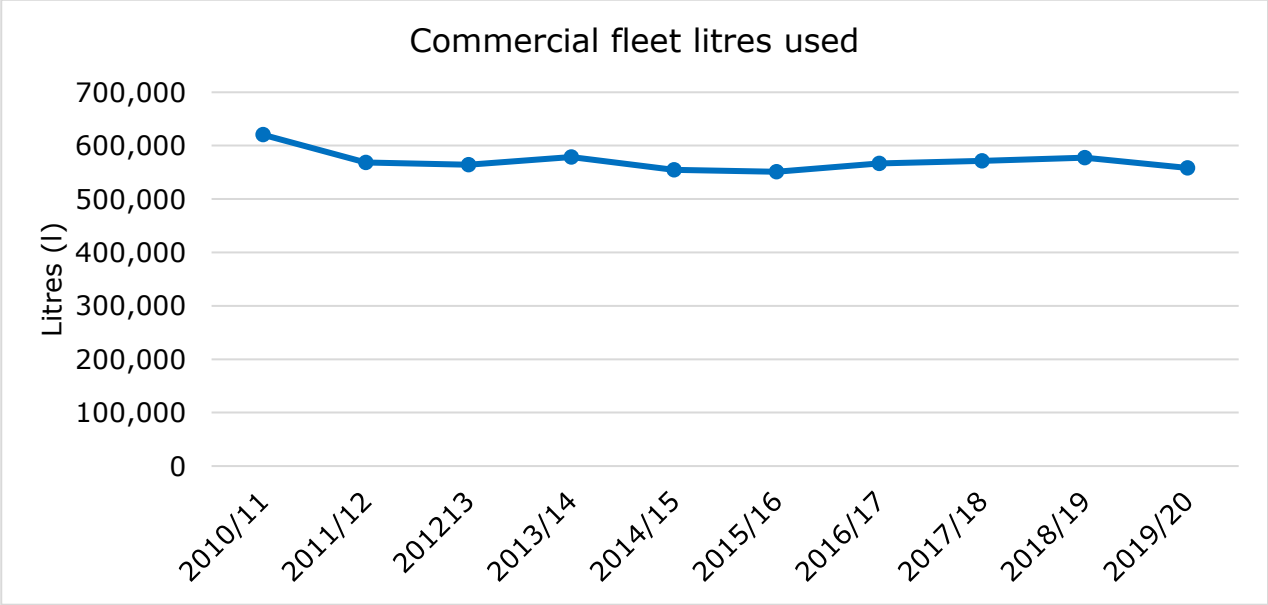
It should be noted that the total litres of fuel used across all vehicles has risen to 706,050 litres in 2019-20 which is a 4% increase on the previous year.

This year the council purchased a battery electric van which does not produce any tailpipe emissions. It will be used for journeys between the new West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH) and other offices, as well as general fleet use around the district.

We will continue to review our fleet renewal program to identify suitable opportunities to include electric vehicles across our fleet.

Moving our fleet vehicles to the WSOH gave us an opportunity to adjust vehicle rounds to reduce trip distances. This move is expected to result in a reduction in refuse collection vehicle miles driven and progress will be reported in 2020-21.

Figure 6 Chart showing commercial fleet fuel use by year



7. Business travel

Target: Reduce the amount of grey fleet kilometres from the baseline year in 2010.

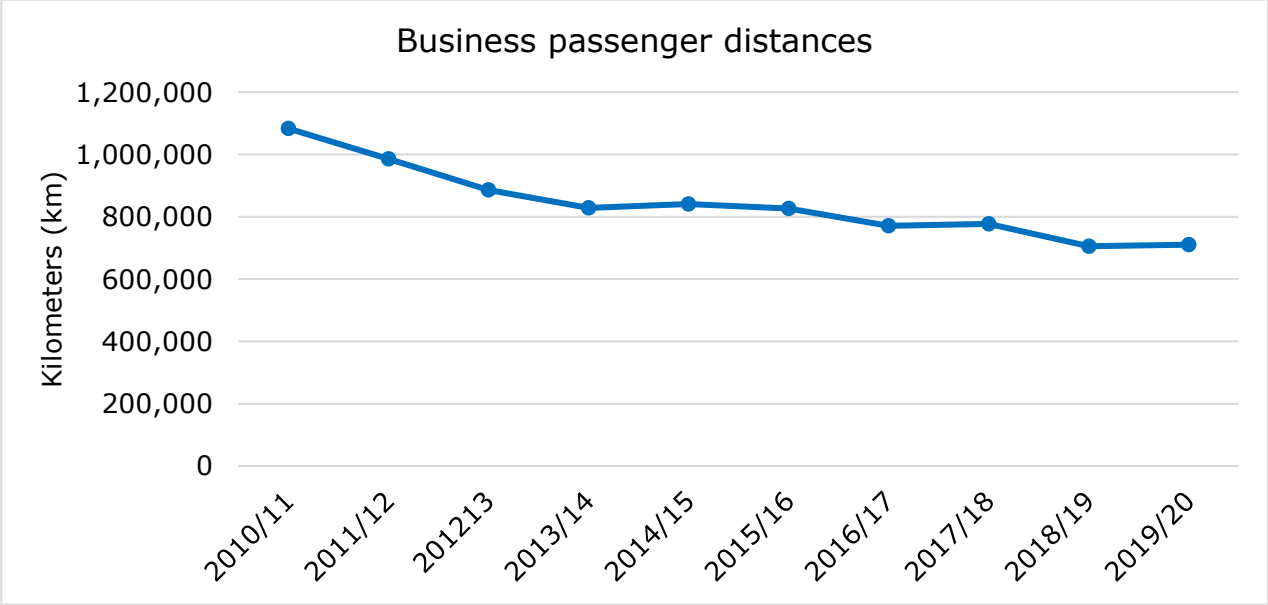
Distance travelled	
Baseline 2010	1,083,316 kilometres
Distance travelled in 2019-20	710,762 kilometres

Business travel includes staff and councillor journeys, pool car use and other owned or leased vehicles. Business passenger kilometres have increased by 1% compared to 2018-19 as shown in Figure 7 below.

Private car use (grey fleet) has increased by 3% in 2019 compared to the previous year and therefore we will work to encourage employees to use pool cars and share vehicles where using public transport isn't possible.

Our pool car service is now provided by a third party however, we will account for the emissions resulting from pool car usage as they are a direct result of staff activity – see section 0. Figure 7 below shows the overall decline in business passenger kilometres over time.

Figure 7 Chart showing business passenger kilometres travelled



7.1 Other transport modes

We have worked to improve the collection of journey data for other modes of transport, improving the accuracy for calculating the distances travelled and the process of gathering journey information that is claimed via the expenses system.

This year has seen a significant increase (267%) in the number of miles covered by cycling – we will continue to encourage employees to record their efforts and cut out short car journeys where possible.

8. Water consumption

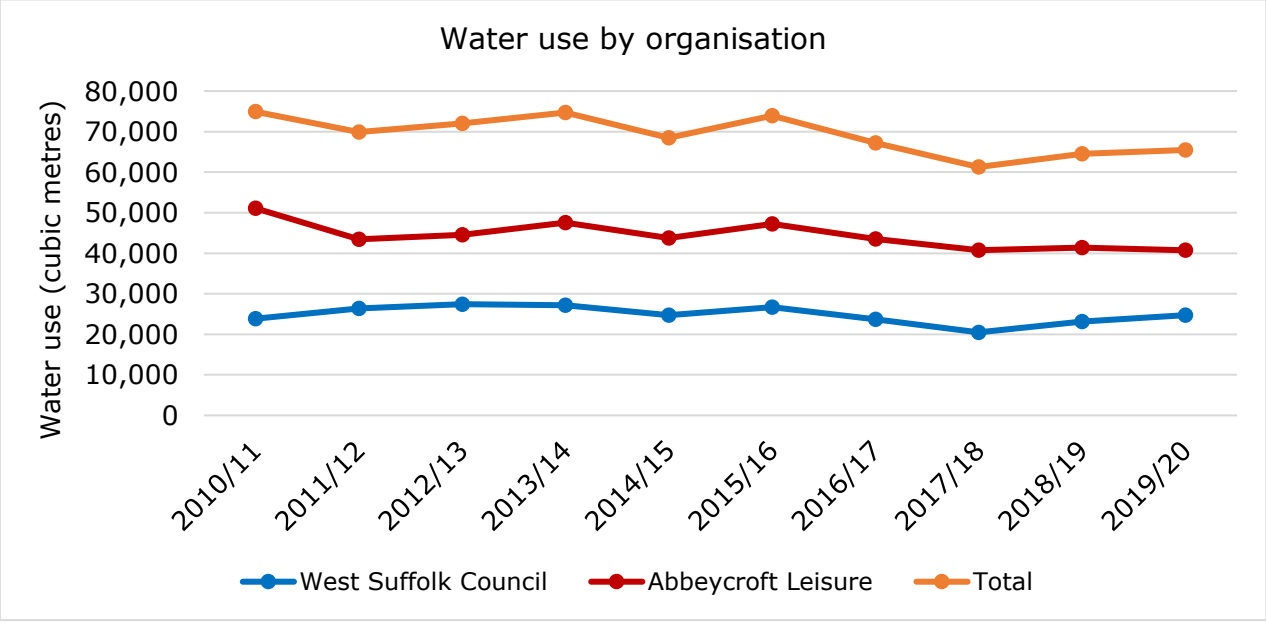
Target: Reduce the amount of water used in council activities from the baseline year in 2010.

Water consumption	
West Suffolk Council Baseline Consumption in 2010 (cubic metres)	23,827
West Suffolk Council Consumption in 2019-20 (cubic metres)	24,737
Abbeycroft Leisure Baseline Consumption in 2010 (cubic metres)	51,076
Abbeycroft Leisure Consumption in 2019-20 (cubic metres)	40,728
Total Baseline Consumption in 2010 (cubic metres)	74,903
Total Consumption in 2019-20 (cubic metres)	65,465

Total water consumption has increased by 1% compared to 2018-19 this is comprised of a 7% increase in consumption from WSC operated property and a 2% decrease in water consumption by Abbeycroft Leisure. Figure 8 shows the change in total water consumption over time and by organisation.

A significant rise in water consumption at Haverhill depot has contributed to the increased WSC consumption. This was due to issues surrounding a faulty valve which controls the amount of fresh water consumed compared to recycled rainwater. These issues have now been resolved.

Figure 8 Chart showing total water consumption by year



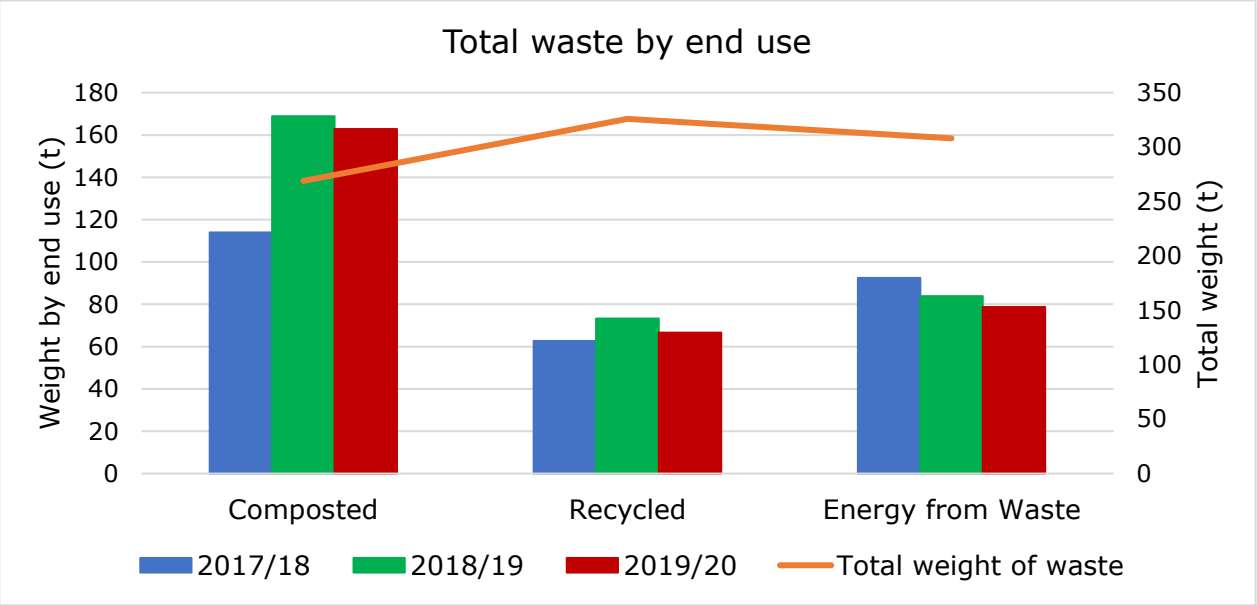
9. Corporate waste

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

WSC continues to ensure legal compliance with respect to the Duty of Care for waste and works to implement new systems and facilities to increase recycling rates of waste generated by our activities.

Figure 9 below shows the weight of key waste streams generated from WSC activity and their disposal method. Compared to 2018-19 there has been a 5% decrease in total waste generated.

Figure 9 Chart showing waste by end use and total waste arisings



9.1 Office waste

During 2019-20 the total amount of waste generated was 89 tonnes, of this residual waste accounted for 41 tonnes and recycling was 48 tonnes.

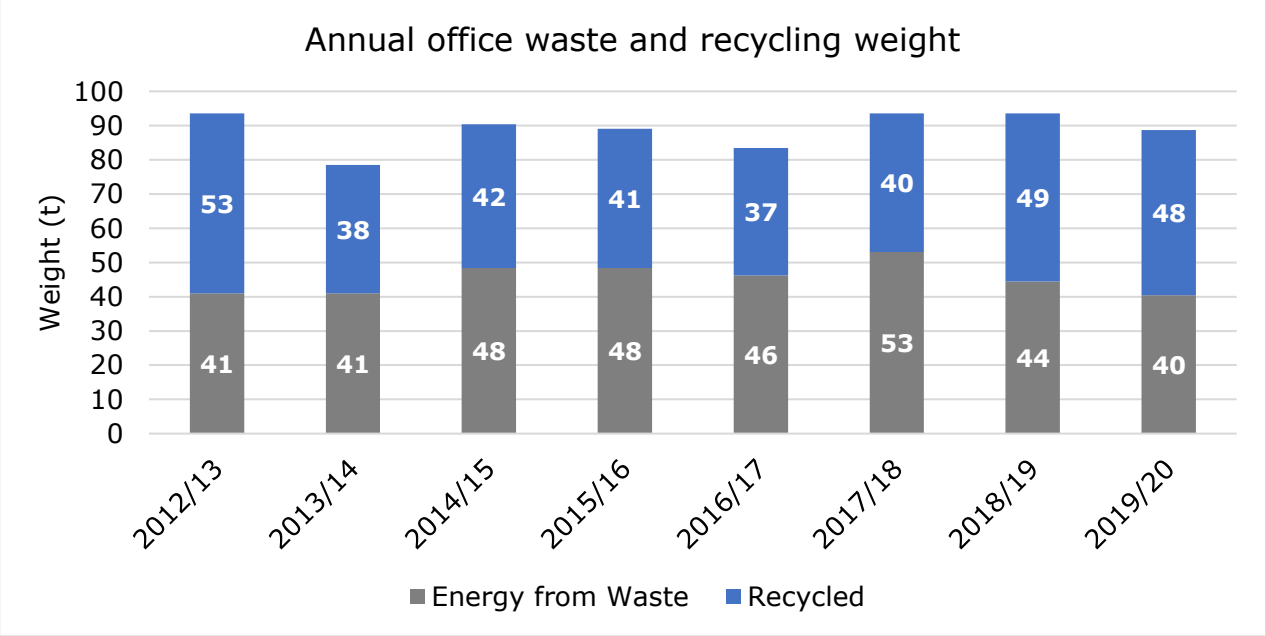
The proportion of waste that is recycled has increased for the second consecutive year to 54.4%. This represents an increase in the recycling rate of 4% compared to 2018-19.

To help understand our office waste composition we conducted a waste audit of Haverhill House. This revealed that generally bins were being used correctly however stand out items could be better disposed of. One example is taking textiles to local collection banks rather than using building waste bins and ensuring that all containers are empty before being disposed of.

A group ran a trial recycling collection of crisp packets using specialist recycler Terracycle in partnership with a local school. We will review the waste streams accepted by the scheme to see if there are other materials which can be recycled in the future.

Figure 10 below shows the proportion of waste recycled compared to that sent to Energy from Waste (EfW) centre each year. EfW aims to move waste up the waste hierarchy unlocking useful electricity from waste which would otherwise have gone to landfill.

Figure 10 Chart showing annual office waste and recycling weights



10. Biodiversity and parks

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

10.1 Green Flag status

The following sites successfully gained Green Flag accreditation during 2019-20:

1. Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds (retained)
2. Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds (retained)
3. East Town Park, Haverhill (retained)
4. Aspal Close, Mildenhall (retained)
5. Brandon Country Park, Brandon (new)

During 2019-20 we secured Green Flag status for Brandon Country Park.
The park supports a total of 806 priority UK Biodiversity Action Plan species including birds, amphibians & reptiles, plants, fungi, bats and moths.

In 2020/21 we will seek to retain the Green Flag status for the sites above and regain the status for West Stow Country Park.

10.2 Ongoing biodiversity and natural environment programmes

Ram Meadow, Bury St Edmunds

Improvement work has continued this year with the installation of stock proof fencing, selective removal of trees and the eradication of ruderal weed species and other work to encourage the establishment of a grass sward suitable for grazing.

Abbey Gardens

Information point and plant sales area

The new information point and plant sales area opened in November 2019, which features a green sedum roof and water harvesting for watering the plants.

Extension into the former Eastgate Nursery area

Work started on site in June 2019 on the extension of the Abbey Gardens. The extension increases the area of public open space in the Eastgate Ward of the District and is scheduled to open in July 2020. The extension includes a new path which will provide easier pedestrian access between Ram Meadow and No Mans Meadows.

Removal of the old tennis courts and the creation of a wildflower labyrinth

In January 2020 work commenced on the removal of the old tennis courts in the Abbey Gardens following the removal of the old tarmac base the area was covered over in soil into which a wild flower maze has been sown, which will further increase the diversity of plants on site.

West Stow

Fruit tree planting was carried out with volunteers on the former tip site plus planting of hedge rows, including hawthorn, blackthorn, rose, crab apple, rowan and bird cherry species.

As part of the continuing management of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), encroaching scrub has been cleared to encourage the rarer Breckland plant communities to establish such as the grass Glaucous Fescue which is now establishing in the cleared areas.

Tree planting

The council continues to manage our trees and invest and plant new trees each year. 1,500 trees were planted on various sites including Parks and Open Spaces, the new development at Kelly's Meadow, Wickambrook and the West Suffolk Operational Hub.

Reducing the environmental impact of our work

Electric powered equipment has been purchased for use at Nowton Park including a brushcutter, leaf blower, pedestrian mower and chainsaw to reduce noise and fossil fuel consumption from parks maintenance.

The performance of this equipment will be monitored, and this will inform future procurement approaches for equipment.

Photo above of the Abbey Gardens information point and plant sales area.

Photo of saplings planted at West Stow as part of a rewilding project on the former tip site.

11. Environmental compliance

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

Target date: Ongoing

12. 2019-20 performance

Throughout the period, WSC continued to ensure effective compliance with environmental regulations at the depots in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, with no formal action being taken by a regulatory body.

The council was granted an Environment Permit to cover activities at the West Suffolk Operational Hub (WSOH), which opened in October 2019. This site is fully operational, and work is ongoing to ensure that new operational processes and site management are embedded.

Appendix 1

Emissions scopes

Figure 11 shows the total greenhouse gas emissions by reporting scope. The greatest proportion of emissions originate from Scope One, referred to as direct emissions; this includes emissions from the consumption of gas and owned transport. Table 1 details where each source of emissions sits within the reporting framework.

Figure 11 Total emissions by scope

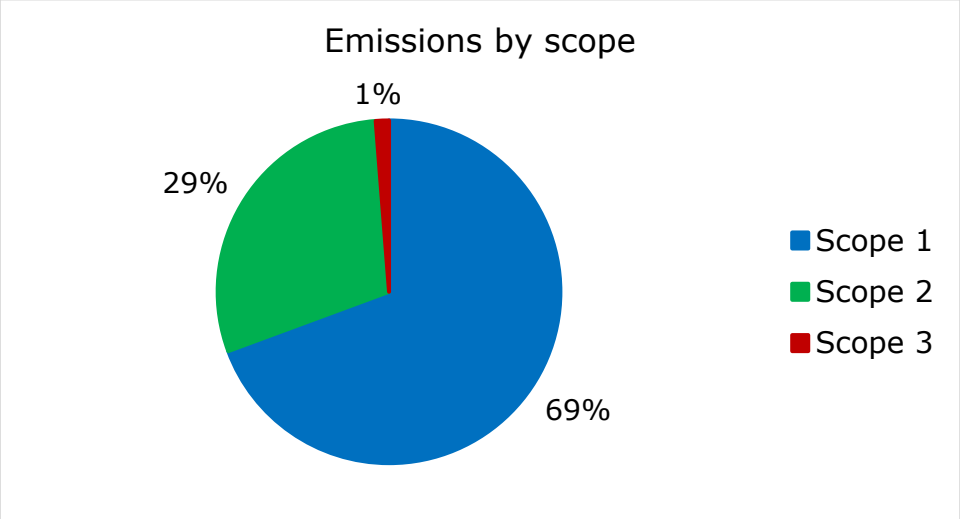


Table 1 Sources of emissions by scope

Emissions scopes	
Scope 1- direct emissions	WSC gas consumption WSC owned transport WSC biomass WSC heating oil ACL gas consumption ACL biomass
Scope 2 – indirect emissions	WSC purchased electricity ACL purchased electricity
Scope 3 – all other indirect emissions	WSC public transport WSC water consumption ACL water consumption

- **Scope 1** – All direct emissions from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel combustion on site such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.
- **Scope 2** – Indirect 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.
- **Scope 3** – All other indirect emissions from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control. They cover emissions associated with business travel, procurement, waste and water. The council currently only reports key Scope 3 emissions sources.