

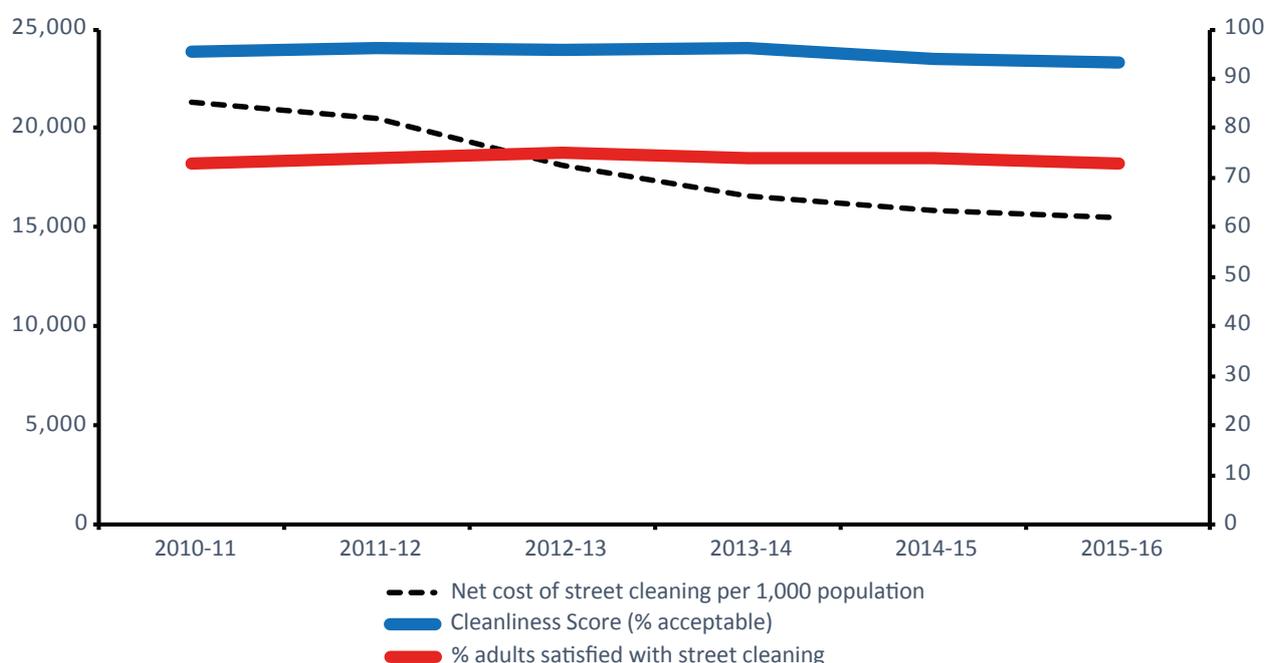
Street Cleaning Briefing 2017

The cleanliness of Scotland's streets remains a priority for councils both in terms of improving the appearance of our streetscapes but also in terms of environmental improvements in the quality of people's lives.

However, along with other environmental services, street cleaning has seen some of the largest budget reductions since 2010/11 with expenditure falling by 25%. Against this reduction in expenditure however, councils have largely succeeded in maintaining performance levels and satisfaction. This indicates great care has been taken to protect key areas of public concern even in the context of reducing budgets.

Street cleaning, cleanliness and satisfaction

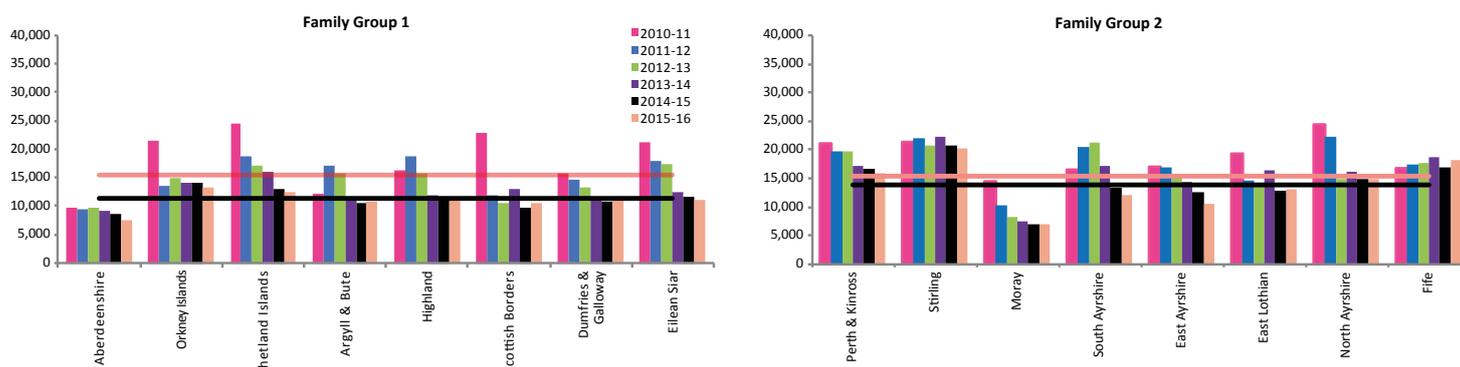
Street Cleaning Costs, Cleanliness and Satisfaction

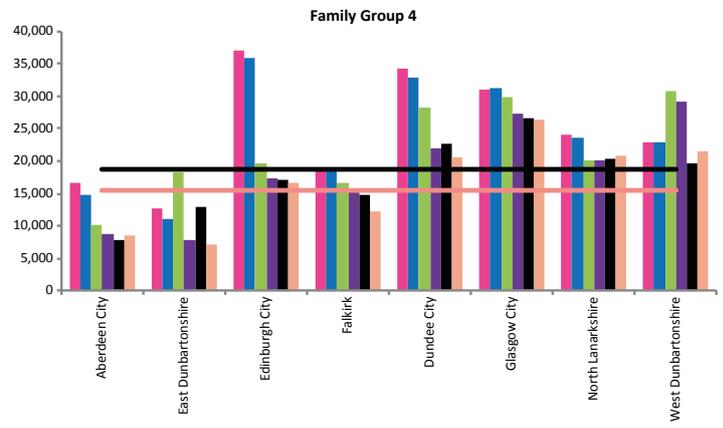
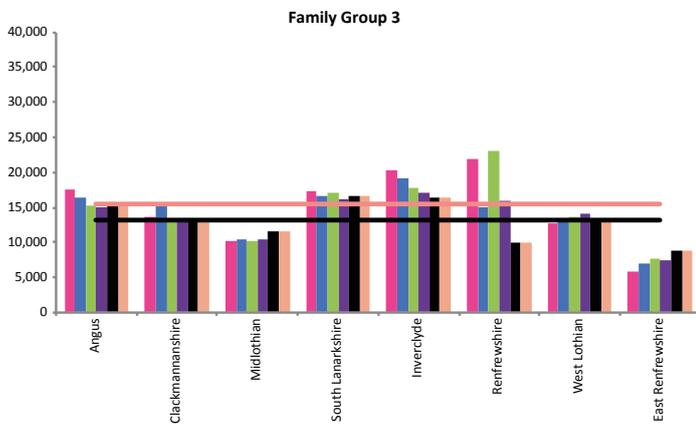


Variation in councils

Costs, satisfaction and cleanliness vary significantly across councils. The rural/urban nature of authorities have an important influence, with urban authorities reporting higher costs and lower levels of cleanliness. Costs range from £6,879 to £26,460, although this has narrowed significantly over this period due to reductions at the higher cost end. Meanwhile, the cleanliness scores range from 81% to 99%, which has widened since the base year, mainly due to reductions in the minimum value. Variation in costs is presented below by Family Group (councils are grouped by rurality).

Family Groups - Cost





Work within family groups identified the following factors as important in interpreting this local variation:

- Mechanisation
- Working patterns
- Workforce composition and demographic profile
- Level of service, targeting and use of business intelligence
- Service delivery model – centralisation/integration
- Asset management and use of super depots and vehicle leasing
- Technological innovation
- Prevention/Enforcement
- Local strategic and political priority given to this area

Sharing Practice—October 2017 Benchmarking Event

There was widespread agreement that a greater focus is needed on **prevention, education and enforcement strategies** to stop people dropping litter, rather on the more reactive side of service delivery. While all councils are doing this, there is significant variation in the level of investment available. There is some progress in linking to corporate communication teams to support efforts in this field, and using vehicles like **local Litter Strategies to develop a corporate wide approach** which hooks in support from essential service such as education, housing and waste management services, however this is not yet widespread.

While all are pursuing this agenda, there has been a general reduction in resource allocated to this area. This approach also requires closer links with other council services, such as communications teams and Environmental Health where most of the enforcement officers are based. There is a common concern enforcement officers are increasingly focussed on other areas, e.g. parking where it is perhaps easier to demonstrate impact.

The **impact of budget reductions** on the quality of local environments have been largely disguised so far within aggregate quality and satisfaction measures.

There has been a concerted effort to protect those service areas of highest public interest in the short term, although there is concern the impact will become much obvious over the longer term – particularly as areas such as proactive areas like prevention/education have been hardest hit. Additionally, the impact on environmental quality appears to be hitting areas of greatest deprivation hardest, which is supported in recent SIMD analysis undertaken by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Asset Management

There is still a focus on driving efficiencies through greater sweating of existing assets and through switching to more efficient models of asset management.

South Lanarkshire are making changes in their use of depots through bulking of street waste and using large skips. This is delivering savings on down time and fuel costs. A sweeper review also led to a reduction in their fleet of a third

West Lothian are using compact sweepers and skips to deliver efficiencies via downtime and travel, although they are trying to resolve the challenge around where to clean them out.

Inverclyde are altering their fleet from large to small vehicles

In general, introduction of bigger depots is something that was part of the low hanging fruit, and done some time ago. However more **rural councils** also mentioned that they couldn't generally sell land released from use.

Stirling now hire all their vehicles, which while more expensive, has meant that they have much lower downtime as vehicles are typically repaired within a day, so they are able to deliver the service more reliably. It was the maintenance of the vehicles that often kept them off the road for weeks (due to internal backlogs within maintenance teams, and priority being given to other vehicles). This also means they can deploy staff more effectively due to having the vehicles available.

East Renfrewshire also no longer own their fleet and have moved to a leasing arrangement which provides much greater flexibility giving the capacity needed at the times needed in a way which was not possible when they owned the fleet.

Most **Urban councils** (Group 4) own their smaller sweepers and outsource their larger ones. Edinburgh owns all their sweepers. There was concern there was currently not a big enough market for leasing sweepers as one company controls the market for this meaning there is no competition for costs and deals

Glasgow and Edinburgh use smaller sweepers at night allowing for more flexible use. They are also better for getting to hard to reach areas.

Most councils (for example **Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire**) agreed that they have primarily been able to reduce staffing and vehicle costs through use of route optimisation software and smarter planning.

Aberdeen City are deploying their team differently, and rather than send to different areas of the city, they are now deploying them in the same area to avoid issues where one machine breaks down and there is no backup.

Level/Type of service

Councils are responding to continued budgetary pressures by driving efficiencies via service integration and restructure, and greater targeting and rationalising of services. All reported facing declining budgets, and that this will have an impact on the level/type of service delivered as all the low hanging fruit has already been taken.

East Renfrewshire are looking to make significant savings in Environmental Services over the coming period, with a commitment to protect front line services

East Ayrshire reported a reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of flower beds (grassed over). They have cut from weekly to an 8.5 day cycle, with mechanical sweeping dropping to 3 weekly. It was noted that the areas focused on within LEAMS are protected, those other areas are being harder hit.

West Dunbartonshire have allocated 25% of their grass to biodiversity – however they noted the risks of this for increased fly tipping due to long grass to hide waste.

West Lothian have restructured their service, with the grounds part of the wider service hit harder. In cleansing, there is now a chargehand in each team, responsible for their ward area. They know the area, and are responsible for it and determine what the priorities are in terms of targeting service. There will also be a review of the frequency of bin collections. The overall impact will be that core areas will be protected, while some peripheral areas (e.g. road verges) will likely see greater impact.

South Lanarkshire deliver Street Cleaning and Grounds within one service, and as the Grounds division previously saw bigger budget reductions, it is now the turn of Street Cleaning.

East Dunbartonshire have focused savings on reducing enforcement, particularly on trade waste.

North Lanarkshire are moving to a more reactive service. They would like to map litter picker routes but there is currently not enough resource for this.

Edinburgh generate some income by cleaning up after the Hogmanay street party for private companies.

Edinburgh had significant issues with contaminated recycling waste, and now do not provide separate recycling bins, instead sending all recycling waste to be sorted at recycling centres.

Highland empty most of their street bins using bin lorries. This isn't something other councils were doing, and were interested to hear more about it.

South Ayrshire have introduced new working patterns and cut fleet by a third. Before the changes were implemented, cleaning took place between

the hours of 7am and 3pm however as most people are at work during these hours, people didn't see their streets being cleaned. The new working hours introduced are 6am-2pm and then 2pm-10pm.

North Ayrshire have also made changes to their working patterns. Cleansing and grounds maintenance have been combined.

Workforce

Councils are responding to continued budgetary pressures by driving efficiencies via workforce management. All are concerned about the continuing reductions to the workforce, and the demands this places on existing staff who are working over and above to try and deliver the same level of service.

There is also concern that the budget reductions have significantly contributed to the aging profile of the workforce, reducing the capacity to recruiting and train younger workforce via apprenticeships/graduate interns etc. This is already playing out in terms long term absence rates, and will have significant longer-term implications in terms of future workforce planning.

Inverclyde will have reduced their workforce by 40% (16 posts) by next Feb/March. They have still to work out how to deliver these reductions, including the role of mechanisation and the impact on service level and scope

As with many other councils, **South Lanarkshire** have an ageing workforce and have a real challenge in getting young staff in. They are sometimes able to get input from Grounds service sessional staff which is helpful.

West Lothian have an apprenticeship scheme, and are reviewing this to improve its effectiveness in creating meaningful pathways to employment. Previously they were losing apprentices after their training was complete when there was no post available so they now hold on to vacancies so there is a pathway. This ensures the investment they've made in apprenticeship training delivers benefits.

South Lanarkshire have centralised their corporate support functions, which mean that some HR/Finance functions have been rolled out to front line Cleansing teams. While there can be benefits in this approach as they have better knowledge of the front-line workforce, it has an impact on front line capacity

South Lanarkshire stressed the need to be honest with communities/decision makers in relation to the impact of continued reductions in funding as without this dialogue, there is too much pressure on the workforce to compensate and do over and above to maintain the service level with half the resource.

Clackmannanshire have an integrated service with

Waste Management where staff from Street Cleaning are frequently drawn in to support Waste operations which reduces capacity

East Dunbartonshire were unique to their group (Group 4) in that they still regular hire seasonal staff and are still actively hiring staff.

North Lanarkshire hired a graduate intern to draft a Bin Siting Policy to ensure they had the correct number of bins of the right type and size in each area.

West Dunbartonshire are currently going through a reduction in staff which may result in a reduction in service.

At **North Ayrshire** working patterns have changed so people work four days then get four days off. This means that there is no overlap when all staff are on at the same time, resulting in a lag of reporting. There is also a need for smart phones to report issues to ensure effective communications between shifts.

Linking to outcomes/strategic priorities

All councils agree that linking in with wider outcomes and national strategies is key to success, however felt that resources are reducing at such a fast pace that development work is becoming harder. Links with Zero Waste Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful were cited as essential in delivering this type of work. Additionally, it was agreed that Litter Prevention Plans could be instrumental in demonstrating to internal customers within the council (e.g. education) that the links between litter prevention and health and wellbeing are a corporate and community responsibility.

Corporate Communications Teams have an important role to play in strengthening this message.

Although there have been efforts to link street cleaning into local and national political agendas around environmental and community empowerment themes, there has been less progress in demonstrating the contribution that investment in quality environments has on wider strategic priorities/outcomes around health and wellbeing, justice, and place making.

East Ayrshire report that the use/reporting of the LEAMS measure locally has helped protect funding.

West Lothian find LEAMs useful with politicians but would find it helpful to have wider discussion around whether the priority is litter picking or ensuring a clean environment, and how this links with community priorities

South Lanarkshire provided a report for Elected Members showing the impact of the changes on the local environment, and linked it into their manifesto. Policies & Procedures also link to Environmental

Impact and Carbon Management strategies. They are also trying to hook the service into the green agenda of local and national politicians, e.g. using SNP Manifesto around environmental commitments. While there are a few 'friends of' groups supported, and Community Led action plans etc, they feel there is less progress hooking core service delivery into the Community Empowerment Agenda, as communities want councils to lead the way.

West Lothian report some links with the Community Empowerment act when they stopped funding hanging baskets/bedding etc, and in some areas communities have stepped in to provide this capacity, e.g. Linlithgow. In these areas, they got sponsors, funded themselves, and the overall impact on service was minimal. However, this has only been productive within grounds services, not within cleansing services.

East Ayrshire linked to Community Empowerment Act via the 'clean my space' initiative, which provided shopkeepers with brush and shovel, and it has worked in places

West Dunbartonshire felt that it is easy to get people on board initially using the communications team but difficult keeping them engaged in the long term.

South Ayrshire are looking at options for bin sponsorship however need the support of their communications team on taking this approach.

Prevention/education/enforcement

There was widespread agreement that a greater focus is needed on prevention, education and enforcement strategies to stop people dropping litter, rather on the more reactive side of service delivery. As with links to strategic outcomes, corporate communication teams have an instrumental role to play in facilitating this shift.

Edinburgh Council created a city-wide environmental behaviour change campaign to decrease high levels of littering and fly tipping. The innovative campaign included a range of different communication tools including humorous messages on bin vinyl stickers that were tailored to different areas of the city. The campaign received significant social media interaction and media attention and resulted in a significant change in behaviour among both tourists and residents. As a result, there was a 50% increase in use of campaign bins and the interaction between environmental services and the public increased significantly.

South Lanarkshire have prepared the first draft of their Litter Prevention Action plan, and see this as a positive way forward to bring in internal stakeholders (waste management, housing, education, planning) and external bodies to get the required buy in

from others, and to deliver a better collective response. They are also working with their corporate communications team to review the use of web based media in relation to the Street Cleaning service, both in relation to general enquiries and wider promotion of key messages

West Lothian are also currently working on their Litter Prevention Action Plan which will enable a whole system approach and draw in corporate resource from other services such as education, housing etc. They have a team of 12 enforcement officers, two of which now have a focussed role around education/schools. There are also differences in how their legal department implement their fixed penalty strategy.

Aberdeen City work with schools to educate children on littering as well as parks and open spaces.

North Lanarkshire employ waste minimisation officers and protective service officers for enforcement and prevention however feel that there could be a more joined up approach across teams to delivering preventative work.

West Dunbartonshire adopted the Pink Poo Campaign, the aim of which is for local communities to highlight exactly how bad the problem of dog fouling is in an area and to embarrass irresponsible dog owners by spraying sighted incidents of dog fouling with pink paint.

If everyone can see how bad the problem is then dog owners should be encouraged to pick up the mess and not leave it behind in the future. They also give out free dog bags (5 million a year) and have seen a reduction in dog mess because of this initiative. On the other hand, Clackmannanshire decided to remove this initiative to save money. There was also a concern that dog fouling happens mostly at night time, when the streets are quiet therefore making it difficult to catch any person not picking up after their dog.

In terms of other preventative measures **West Dunbartonshire** do work with primary schools and have created 'bin man' videos with superheroes to appeal to the younger generation. They also try to work where possible with other organisations/ partners such as the Police and would like to get involved more with secondary schools recognising the proportion of litter generated around schools.

North Ayrshire report that secondary pupils receive detention or a letter home to their parents as a preventative measure.

South Ayrshire make good use of enforcement and often target businesses. As a result, they feel that their site usage/ skip hire has increased. For education, they do a four-week block (one afternoon every four weeks) with primary four and primary five pupils. They have also worked with a supplier from

England to provide pupils with educational books. The books are aimed at older children (primary seven) however, South Ayrshire feel that this then encourages the students to take the book home and discuss with their family or carer meaning they are also learning about recycling etc. They are soon to target secondary schools, to build teachers knowledge about recycling/litter picking.

Stirling and Scottish Borders both expressed an appetite to increase the amount of education/prevention work, but were limited due to current staff resourcing for such activities.

Data and Technology

Digital channel shift is key for councils, especially in developing sustainable and cost-effective approaches to service delivery.

There was a strong appetite for greater use of routing software, such as 'webaspects' or 'route smart' beyond simply tracking issues (e.g. a damaged car), and toward greater understanding of the value of the software in terms of utilising staff and vehicles as effectively as possible.

Technologically enhanced bins such as 'big belly', and a new offer called 'clean cube' are used by many councils. For example, **Stirling** carried out research to map busy times with staff deployment, and are exploring the option of using Clean Cube Bins to improve their approach. Clean Cube Bins are a smart waste compacting bin which houses a standard wheelie bin and is powered by solar energy. Clean Cube bins have built-in sensor which detect when the bin is full and compact the contents, allowing the bin to hold up to eight times more rubbish, increasing the bin capacity by up to 700%, considerably reducing overflow and reducing waste collection by up to 85%. Intuitive linked software means Clean Cube bins are easy to manage and maintain, the software sends an alert when it reaches its capacity, reducing the need for manual handling and a helpful tool for planning route optimisation.

West Lothian have invested in trackers to monitor how long brushes are working and outputs etc

Some councils (**Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire**) are using Routesmart route optimisation software which helps to ensure the most amount of 'up time' for sweepers.

East Dunbartonshire are planning a data capturing exercise for bins focusing on capacity.

Edinburgh have 300 bin sensors that are moved to different areas depending on where the service needs to collect information.

North Ayrshire use Webaspx software for route optimisation on street cleaning. If this is successful, it would then also be used for bin collection.

Inverclyde would like to implement GPS tracking on bins so they know which bins are full and when, however, due to the high cost of introducing this new approach they are unable to go further at this time. They are also interested in a system where the public can report issues by sending a photo, and the location is automatically tracked and information uploaded on to a central system which then displays how quickly the work is being done.



Useful Links

Presentation: [Our Edinburgh](#)

Case Study: [Our Edinburgh case study](#)

Explore the LGBF data by service, across councils and over time using the [My Local Council Tool](#)