



Environmental Services



Environmental services are an area of significant spend for local authorities, and include waste management, street cleaning, roads services, trading standards and environmental health. These areas have seen some of the largest budget reductions in recent years, with overall gross spend on environmental services reducing by 16% since 2010/11 (range: -39% to +7%) and expenditure on roads services reducing by 28% (range: -79% to +215%).

Against this reduction in expenditure, councils face growing challenges in maintaining or improving performance levels in relation to recycling, street cleanliness, roads condition and satisfaction. The financial pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to exacerbate these challenges. Local authorities reported more waste produced from households than normal, as lockdowns kept families at home, coupled with an increase in fly tipping responses. Additionally, the impact of lockdown on roads services has resulted in a reduction in planned work and a reliance on reactive repairs of defects to keep road networks safe, and this will inevitably lead to a backlog of repair work and a reduction in overall network condition and satisfaction. Considerable demands have been placed on regulatory services (environment health and trading standards) to enforce COVID-19 public health measures and meet the demand for business support. The initial impacts of these COVID related pressures can be observed within the LGBF 2020/21 data outlined below, and it will be vital to monitor these areas closely in the coming period to understand the medium to longer-term impacts.

Waste management

In examining the cost of waste management services across councils we use a measure of the net cost of waste collection and disposal per premise. As this measure was introduced in 2012/13, only nine years of data is presented here.

Net costs are used in recognition of the increased efforts of councils to recycle waste which generates additional costs to the service but also an additional revenue stream as recycled waste is sold by councils into recycling markets. It is worth noting that the price for recycle is volatile and influenced by global economic conditions.

Going forward, it will be important to review the impact that the Deposit Return Scheme will have on data for waste services as this is likely to change the baseline quite considerably. For example, glass bottles will no longer be included in recycling rates, and the lost income from glass may also have an impact on service costs.

In 2020/21, the combined net cost of waste disposal and collection was £177, ranging from £103 to £246. Rural authorities continue to spend more compared to urban authorities, although not significantly so (£191 compared to £179).

The combined waste cost reduced by 3.1% between 2012/13 and 2020/21, falling from £182 to £177 per premise. There is a mixed pattern across councils however, with 17 authorities reporting increased costs during this period counter to the national trend. In 2020/21, net costs reduced by 1%, from £179 to £177 per premise. Again, a very mixed picture is evident among councils, with 16 councils reporting increased combined waste costs in the most recent year counter to the national trend. Urban authorities on average were more likely to see costs increase in the most recent year (+1.4%) compared to a 5% average reduction for rural authorities.

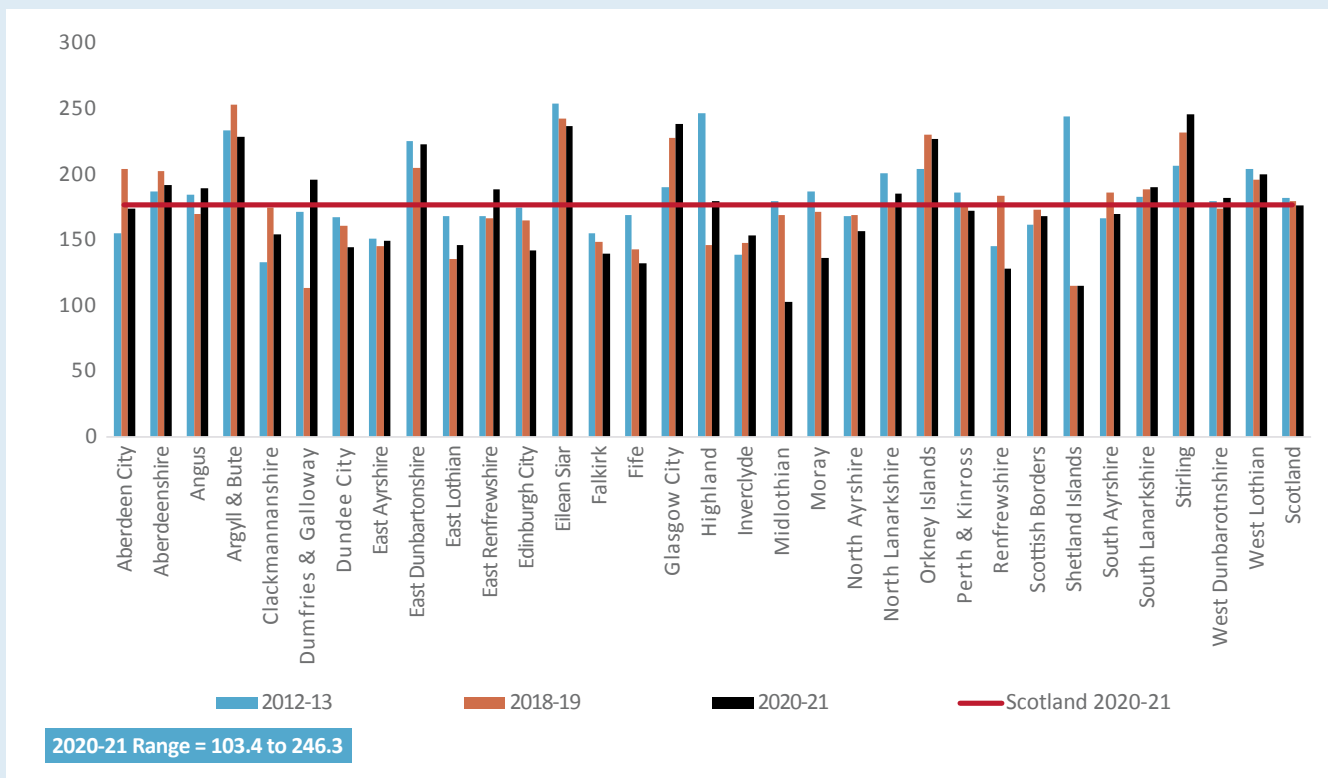
Factors that will be important in interpreting these trends include: the small increase in residential waste in most areas due to lockdowns keeping families at home and increased homeworking; a drop in recycling due to contamination/capacity issues for households and temporary closure of household waste recycling centres due to COVID-19; and additional costs arising from physical distancing service adaptations.



Table 39: Net cost of waste collection and disposal per premise (£)

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Change 2019-20 to 2020-21	% Change 2012-13 to 2020-21
Collection	£71.28	£72.28	£75.55	£74.39	£73.11	£73.47	£73.41	£73.41	£72.35	-1.5%	1.5%
Disposal	£111.28	£108.64	£106.29	£112.84	£111.88	£112.91	£106.36	£105.76	£104.50	-1.2%	-6.1%
Total	£182.56	£180.92	£181.84	£187.24	£184.99	£186.38	£179.77	£179.18	£176.84	-1.3%	-3.1%

Fig 84: Net cost of waste collection and disposal per premise (£)



Source: council supplied expenditure and number of premises figures



Local Variation – Combined net cost of waste collection and disposal per premise

2020/21 Value

Scotland: £177; council range: £103 - £246. Widened variation in the most recent year. Rural authorities tend to spend more on average (£193 compared to £179, not statistically significant).

Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland: -1.3%; councils: 16 increased and 16 decreased (range -31% to +13%)

Since 2012/13: Scotland: -3.1%; councils: 14 increased and 18 decreased (range -53% to +25%)

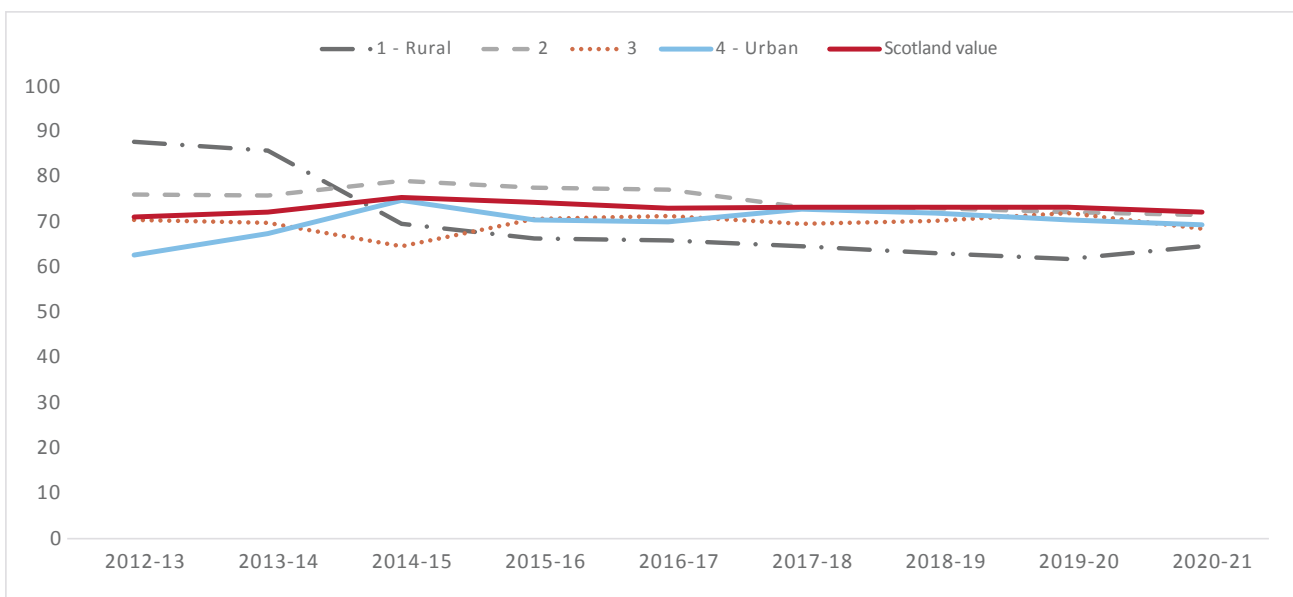


Waste collection

Over the nine-year period from 2012/13 to 2020/21 the Scottish average cost per premise for waste collection increased from £71.28 to £72.35, representing a real terms percentage increase of 1.5%. While the number of premises increased by 6.6% during this period, total spend increased by 7.3%.

While average costs increased by 1.5% across the period, the range in movement is -64% to +29% (excluding outliers), with 17 councils reporting reducing costs counter to the national trend. Rural authorities have on average seen the largest decrease in costs during this period, falling from £88 per premise to £65, a decrease of 26%. Meanwhile urban authorities on average have seen their costs rise by 11% over the same period.

Fig 85: Net cost of waste collection per premise (£) by family group - rurality

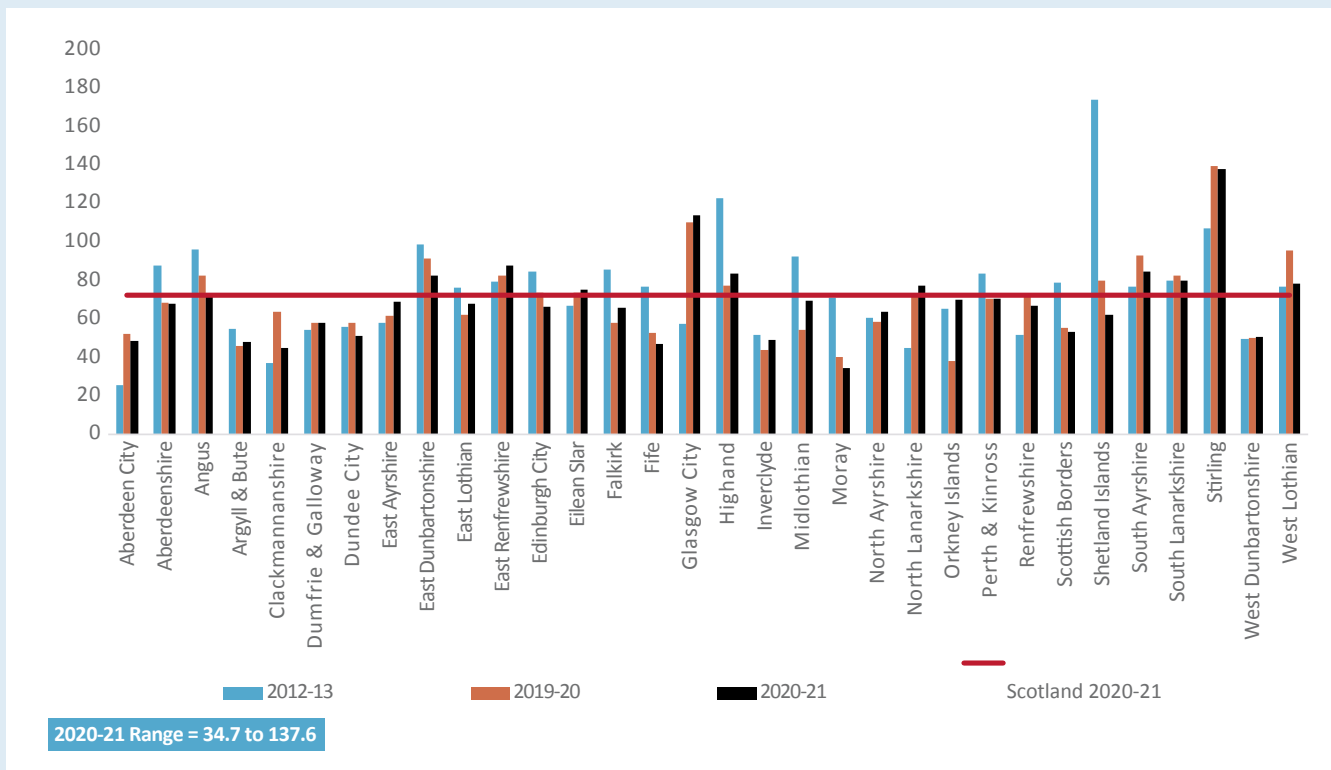


In 2020/21, the net cost of collection reduced by 1.5% to £72.35. There is considerable and widening variation between councils in relation to waste collection costs, ranging from £34.66 to £137.56 (£87.70 excluding outliers). Rural authorities now tend to have lower costs on average following greater reductions since the base year (£65 compared to £69), although the difference is not significant.

The recent cost reduction reflects a 0.7% reduction in net expenditure, and a 0.8% growth in premises served. While the average cost reduced slightly, there was significant variation between councils with movement ranging from a 28.9% reduction in costs to an 83% increase. 15 authorities reported increased costs in 2020/21, counter to the national trend.



Fig 86: Net cost of waste collection per premise (£)



Source: council supplied expenditure and number of premises figures



Local Variation – Net cost of waste collection per premise

2020/21 Value

Scotland value: £72.30; council range: £34.66 - £137.56 (£34.66 - £87.70 excluding outliers). Variation widened in most recent year. Following reductions since the base year, costs are lower in rural authorities compared to more urban authorities (£65 compared to £69, not statistically significant).

Change Over Time

In 2020/21, Scotland: -1.5%; councils: 15 increased and 17 decreased (range: -28.9% to +83%).

Since 2012/13: Scotland: +1.5%; councils: 15 increased and 17 decreased (range: -64.3% to +97.7%) (-64.3% to +29% excluding outliers)

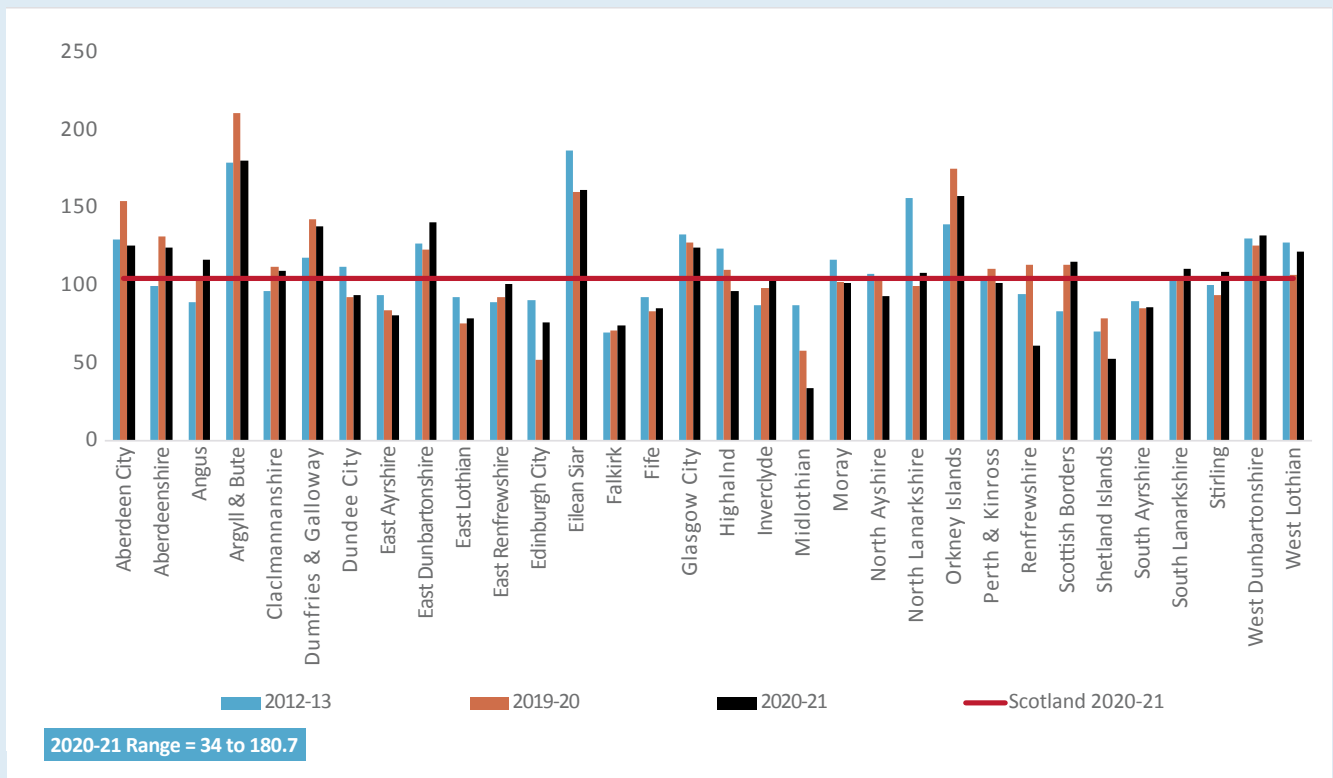
Waste disposal

Over the nine-year period from 2012/13 to 2020/21 the Scottish average net cost of waste disposal has reduced by 6.1%, from £111.28 to £104.50 per premise. This reflects a 0.7% reduction in net expenditure and a 6.6% increase in the number of premises served. The trend has not been consistent across the period, with costs falling in the first two years, before increasing in 2015/16, and then falling back in the past three years. While average costs have reduced by 6.1% since 2012/13, almost half of authorities report increased costs during the period counter to the national trend.



In 2020/21, costs decreased by 1.2%, reflecting a 0.5% reduction in expenditure, and 0.8% growth in premises served. The range in disposal costs across councils was £34.02 to £180.69. Variation has narrowed in the most recent year, with analysis revealing higher costs in rural authorities compared to urban authorities (£128 compared to £109), although this is no longer significant. While average costs reduced by 1.2% in 2020/21, more than half of authorities report an increase in costs during this year.

Fig 87: Net cost of waste disposal per premise (£)



Source: council supplied expenditure and number of premises figures



Local Variation – Net cost of waste collection per premise

2020/21 Value

Scotland: £104.50; council range £34.02 to £180.69 (£53.10 to £161.80 excluding outliers). Narrowing variation in the most recent year. Higher costs in rural authorities compared to more urban authorities (£128 compared to £109, not statistically significant).

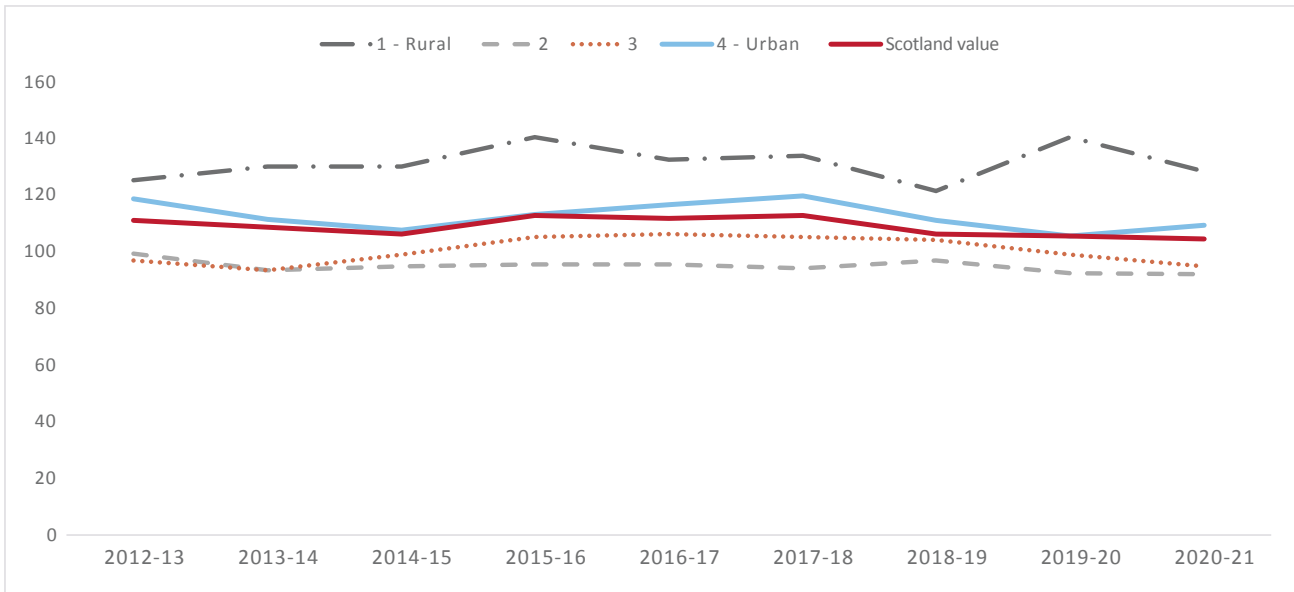
Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland: -1.2%; councils: 17 councils increased and 15 decreased (range: -45.8% to +46.3%).

Since 2012/13: Scotland -6.1%; councils: 14 increased and 18 decreased (range: -61.1% to +38.2%).



Fig 88: Net cost of waste disposal per premise (£) by family group - rurality



Recycling

Over recent years councils have put greater emphasis on the recycling of waste in compliance with Scotland’s Making Things Last strategy (2016) to achieve Scotland’s target to recycle 70% of all waste by 2025.³⁷ There has also been raised awareness of environmental factors from both producers and consumers, including a greater focus on reducing unnecessary waste packaging which has resulted in less waste in the system overall.

From 2014/15, the recycling rate is calculated on a different basis from that used in previous years and so is not directly comparable. It is useful to note that for individual authorities, the new SEPA recycling definition may result in a slightly lower recycling rate than the previous definition. Prior to 2014, household waste composted that did not reach the quality standards set by PAS 100/110 was included in the recycling figures.³⁸

Prior to COVID-19, recycling rates had improved across Scotland from 42.8% in 2014/15 to 44.9% in 2019/20. However, in 2020/21, recycling rates dropped 2.9 percentage points to 42%, the lowest rate since LGBF reporting began. Recycling has likely been impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown and other restrictions, with both the amount of waste recycled and the waste recycling rate being the lowest recorded since 2013.

While the average rate of recycling fell by 2.9 percentage points in 2020/21, the range in movement across councils is -16.9 percentage points to +14.1 percentage points, with 6 authorities reporting an increase in their recycling rate in the most recent year counter to the national trend.

37 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-zero-waste-plan/>

38 <https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/532167/2019-household-waste-commentary.pdf>



Table 40: Percentage of household waste that is recycled

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Value Change 2019-20 to 2020-21	Value Change 2010-11 to 2020-21
38.7	40.1	41.1	42.2	42.8	44.2	45.2	45.6	44.7	44.9	42.0	-2.9	3.3

**Note: Figures from 2010/11 – 2013/14 use the old recycling definition, while figures from 2014/15 to 2019/20 are calculated using the new definition.*

The level of variation between councils decreased markedly in 2020/21. While rural authorities still record lower recycling rates on average, they were more likely to show continued improvement in 2020/21; increasing by 3pp, compared to reductions of between 6pp and 14pp for more urban and semi-urban groupings. This has narrowed the gap between rural and urban councils, and there is no longer a statistically significant difference in current rates.

Fig 89: Percentage of total household waste that is recycled by family group - rurality

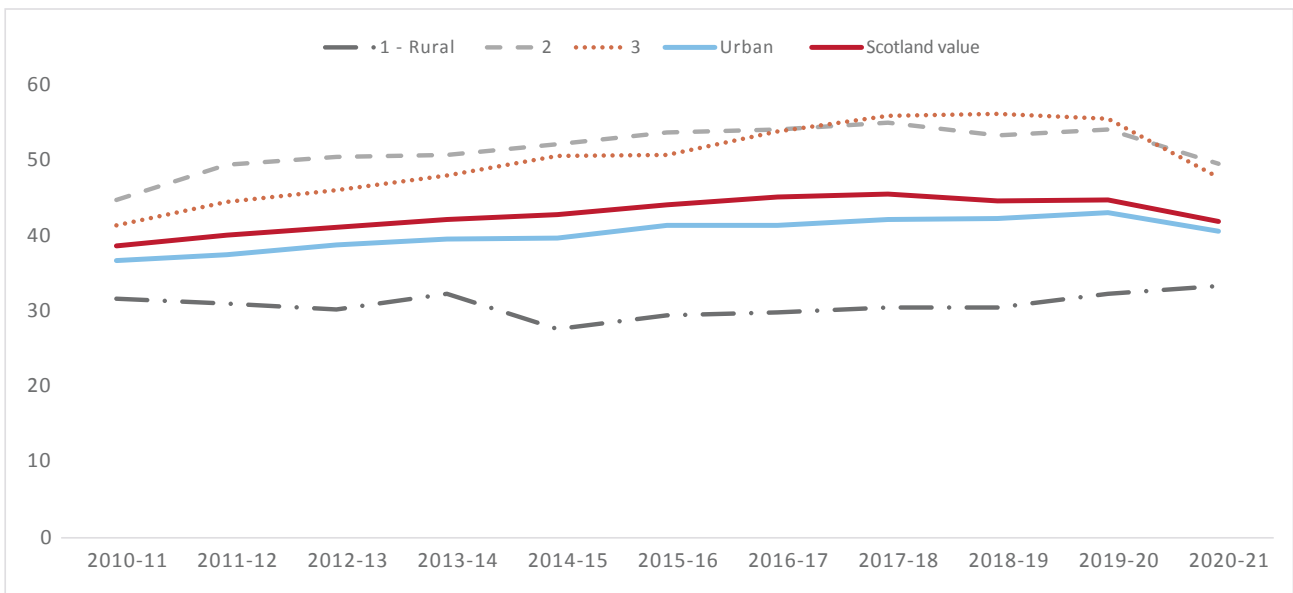
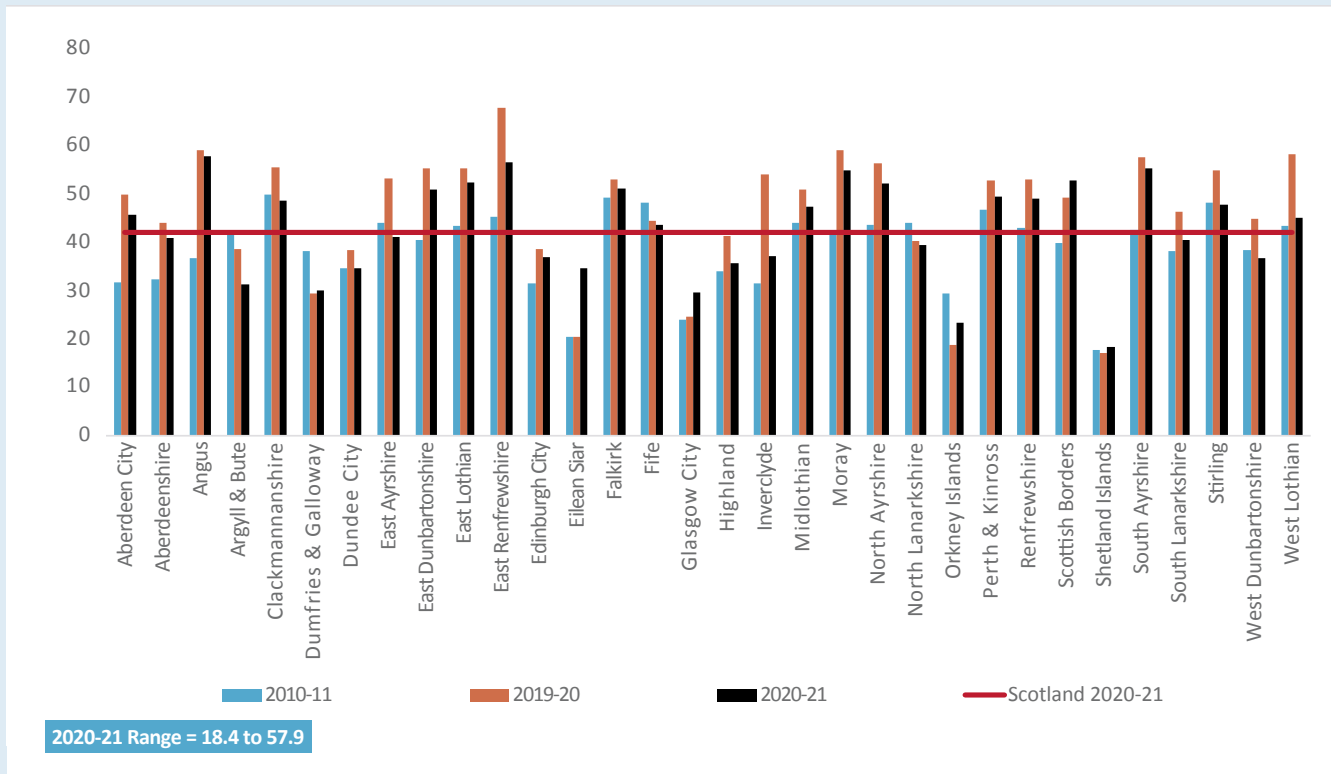




Fig 90: Percentage of total household waste that is recycled



Source: WasteDataFlow, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Data is calendar year.



Local Variation – The percentage of total household waste arising that is recycled

2020/21 Value

Scotland: 42%; council range 18.4% - 57.9% (29.6% - 57.9 excluding outliers). Narrowed variation in the most recent year. Rural councils show a lower recycling rate on average compared to urban councils (34.6% compared to 39.4%, not statistically significant).

Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland: -2.9pp; councils: 6 increased and 26 decreased (range: -16.9pp to +14.1pp).

Since 2010/11: Scotland: -3.3pp; councils: 23 increased and 9 decreased (range: -10.3pp to +21.2pp).

Percentage of adults satisfied with waste collection

The publication of Scottish Household Survey satisfaction data at council level has been delayed this year due to COVID related changes which were required to be introduced to the standard survey methodology in 2020. This change in methodology has introduced comparability issues in relation to data from previous years which will need to be addressed in future publications. Satisfaction data for 2020/21 is therefore not currently available for inclusion in the LGBF.



Historic data reveals that satisfaction levels with waste collection services in 2019/20 were 8 percentage points lower than they were in 2010/11, falling from 80.9% to 73.0%. While the average satisfaction level has reduced by 8 percentage points since 2010/11, the range in movement is -33pp to +6pp, with eight authorities reporting improved satisfaction levels across this period counter to the national trend.

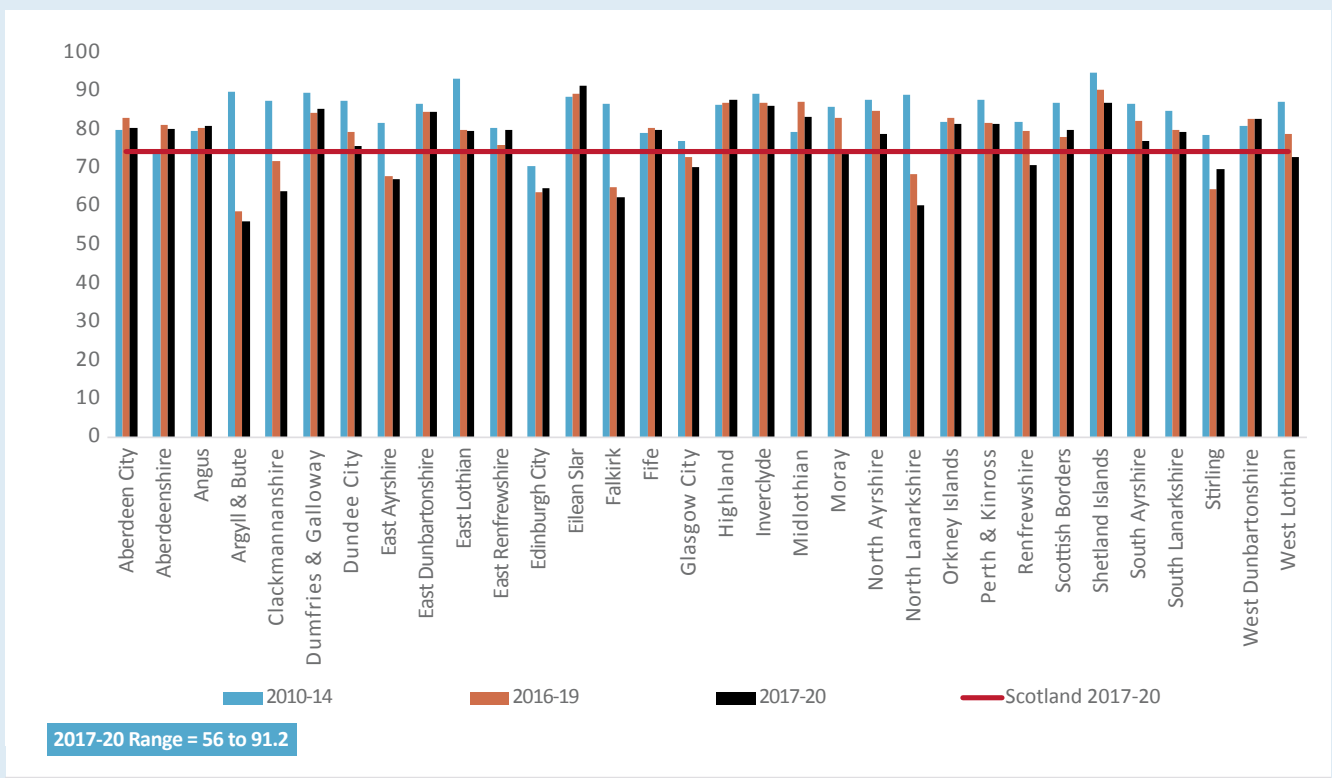
In 2019/20 there was widening variation across councils, with satisfaction rates ranging from 56% to 91% across Scotland. Variation is not systematically related to deprivation, rurality or size of council.

Table 41: Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection

2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Value Change 2018-19 to 2019-20	Value Change 2010-11 to 2019-20
80.9	83.0	83.0	84.0	82.0	79.0	75.0	74.9	73.0	dna	-1.9	-7.9

As noted previously, the satisfaction data is drawn from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) and while proportionate at Scotland level, there are limitations at local authority level in relation to the very small sample sizes and low confidence levels. To boost sample sizes 3-year rolled averages have been used to ensure the required level of precision at local levels. From 2018/19, questions used in the LGBF have also been included in the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) which provides a boosted sample size.

Fig 91: Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collection



Source: Scottish Household Survey



Street cleaning

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. The revised Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland)³⁹ came into force in 2018 and may affect both costs and standards going forward.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on this area. Litter picking services were paused and reduced as a result of restrictions, and as resources were redeployed towards emergency response and critical services. Additional costs arose from physical distancing service adaptations, some of which remain in place currently. The pause in litter picking, alongside the closure of recycling centres and the reported increase in fly tipping will all be important.

Street cleanliness is presented using the Street Cleanliness Score, which is produced by Keep Scotland Beautiful.⁴⁰ This measures the percentage of areas assessed as 'clean' rather than completely litter free sites (considered impractical in areas of high footfall) and allows authorities to tackle litter problem areas to achieve better results.

The Scottish average for the cleanliness score has remained above 90% since the base year, although scores have shown a reducing trend since 2013/14. In 2020/21, 90.1% of streets were assessed as 'clean', a decrease of 1.1 percentage points in the past 12 months. Rates are down by 5.3 percentage points from 95.4% in 2010/11.

The national trend is not however universal. Over the longer term, 4 authorities report improvements in the cleanliness score counter to the national trend. In 2020/21 the picture is even more mixed, with over a third of councils improving counter to trend. Urban and deprived council areas saw the sharpest reduction across the longer period (by between 6pp - 8pp on average, compared to average reductions of 1pp - 2pp for rural/affluent council areas. The urban effect remains pronounced in 2020/21 data, with urban authorities reporting an average 3pp reduction compared to a 1pp reduction in more rural authorities.

Table 42: Percentage of clean streets

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Value Change 2019-20 to 2020-21	Value Change 2010-11 to 2020-21
95.4	96.1	95.8	96.1	93.9	93.4	93.9	92.2	92.8	92.2	90.1	-2.1	-5.3

There is a relatively narrow range of cleanliness scores across Scotland, although the level of variation has widened markedly in the past 12 months. In 2020/21, scores ranged from 81.1% to 100%, with urban and deprived areas reporting significantly lower scores (e.g. 87-89% for urban or deprived areas compared to 93%-95% for rural or affluent areas). This is supported by evidence published by Keep Scotland Beautiful, highlighting a significantly more rapid decline of local environmental quality in the poorest parts of Scotland.⁴¹

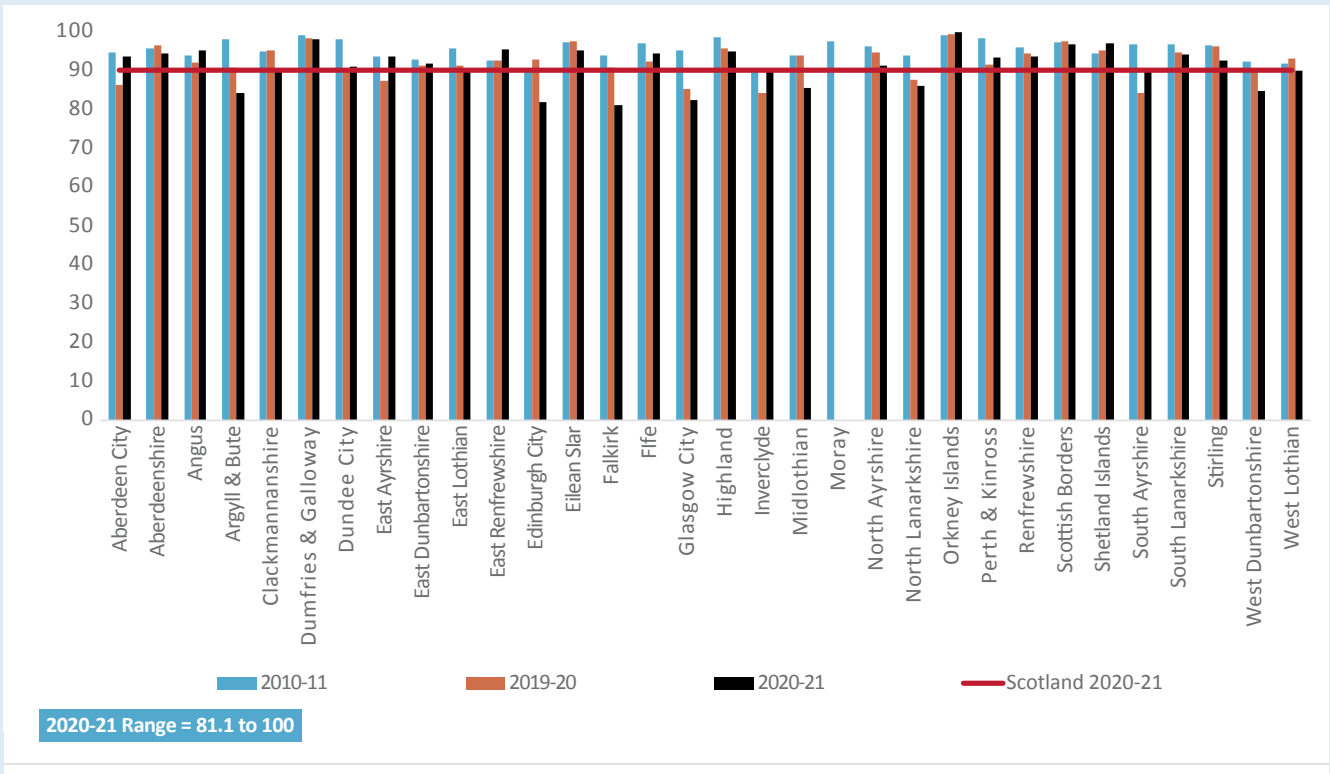
³⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-practice-litter-refuse-scotland-2018/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/>

⁴¹ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/media/1566897/leq-2020-report-final-041220.pdf>



Fig 92: Cleanliness score (percentage acceptable)



Source: Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS), Keep Scotland Beautiful Note: Missing values reflect no data returned for that year



Local Variation – Street cleanliness score

2020/21 Value

Scotland: 90.1%; council range: 81% - 100%. Widening variation and is at its widest since the base year. Urban and deprived areas report significantly lower scores compared to rural and more affluent areas. (87% in urban compared to 93% in rural, 89% in deprived areas compared to 95% in more affluent areas)

Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland: -2.1pp; councils: 12 increased and 19 decreased; (range: -11.1pp to +7.4pp). Urban authorities decreased by 3pp, compared to 1pp for more rural authorities, (not statistically significant)

Since 2010/11: Scotland -5.3pp; councils: 4 increased and 27 decreased (range: -13.7pp to +2.9pp). Urban and deprived authorities reduced by between 6pp – 8pp, compared to 1pp-2pp for more rural/affluent authorities, (not statistically significant)



Fig 93: Cleanliness score (percentage acceptable) by family group - rurality

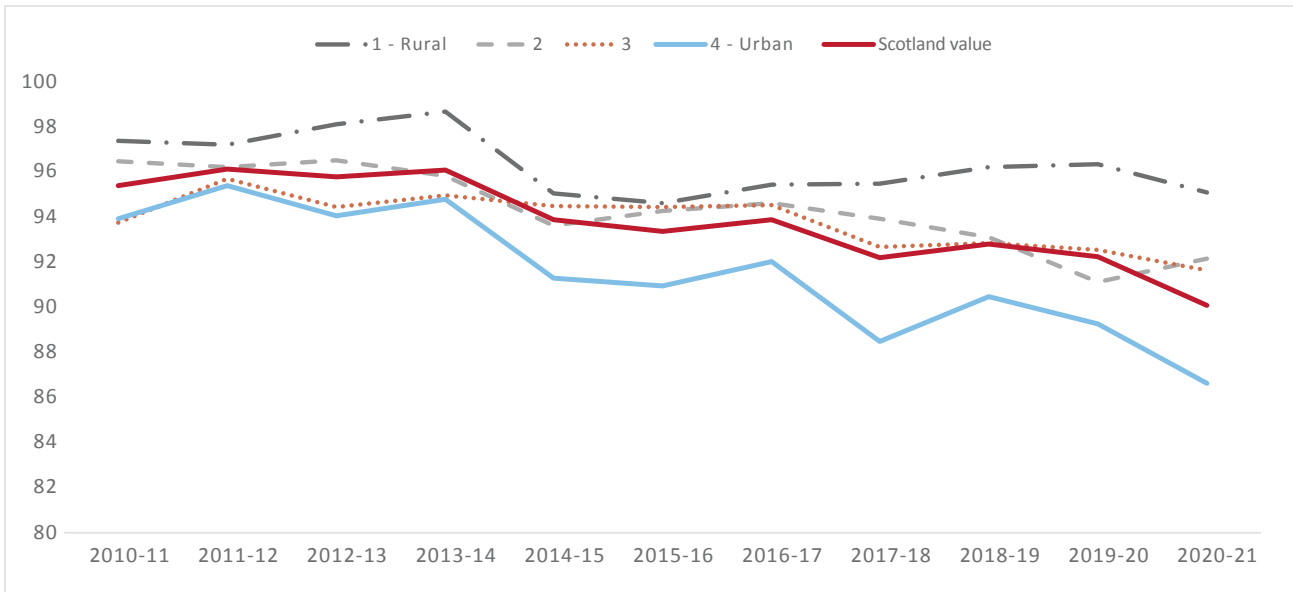
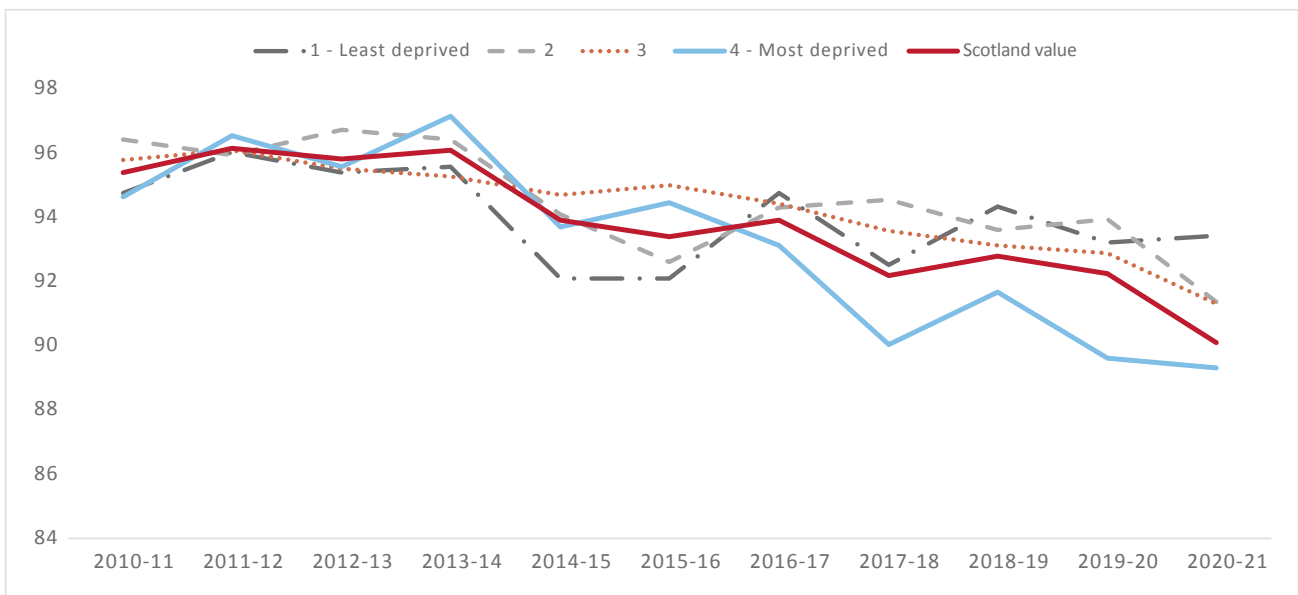


Fig 94: Cleanliness score (percentage acceptable) by family group - deprivation



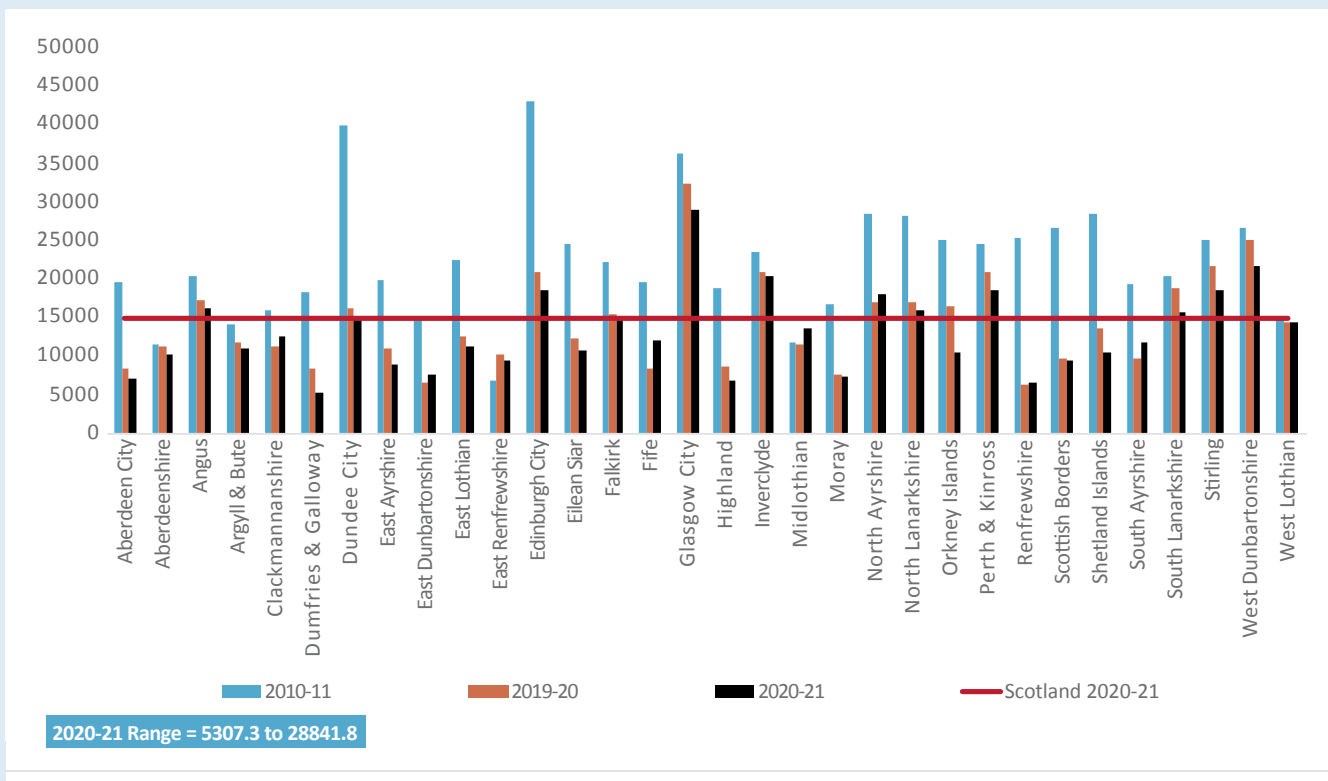
Over the same 11-year period the Scottish average for net cost of street cleaning has reduced by 40.1%, from £24,787 per 1,000 population in 2010/11 to £14,845 in 2020/21. This reflects a year on year reduction in costs, including a 7.1% reduction in the past 12 months. This reducing trend is not true for all councils, however. Two councils report increasing costs since 2010/11, and a quarter of councils report increasing costs and in the most recent year counter to the national trend. Rural authorities on average report sharper reductions in spend in both the long term and in the most recent year.



Table 43: Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (£)

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Change 2019-20 to 2020-21	% Change 2010-11 to 2020-21
24,787	23,838	21,141	19,145	18,431	17,886	16,413	17,207	16,210	15,980	14,845	-7.1%	-40.1%

Fig 95: Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (£)



Source: Mid-year population estimates, National Records Scotland (NRS); council supplied figures



Local Variation – Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population

2020/21 Value

Scotland: £14,845; council range: £5307 - £28,842. Narrowing variation in most recent year. Deprived council areas spend more than more affluent councils (£17,386 compared to £11,517, statistically significant).

Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland: -1.2%; councils: 17 increased and 15 decreased (range: -45.8% to +46.3%).

Since 2010/11: Scotland: -6.1%; councils: 14 increased and 18 decreased (range: -61.1% to +38.2%).



There is significant but narrowing variation across councils, with street cleaning costs ranging from £5,307 to £28,842 in 2020/21. Urban and deprived authorities tend to report higher costs on average, significantly so for deprived areas. The average difference between rural and urban authorities is £16,149 compared to £9,265; and for most and least deprived authorities it is £17,286 compared to £11,517

Fig 96: Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (£) by family group - deprivation

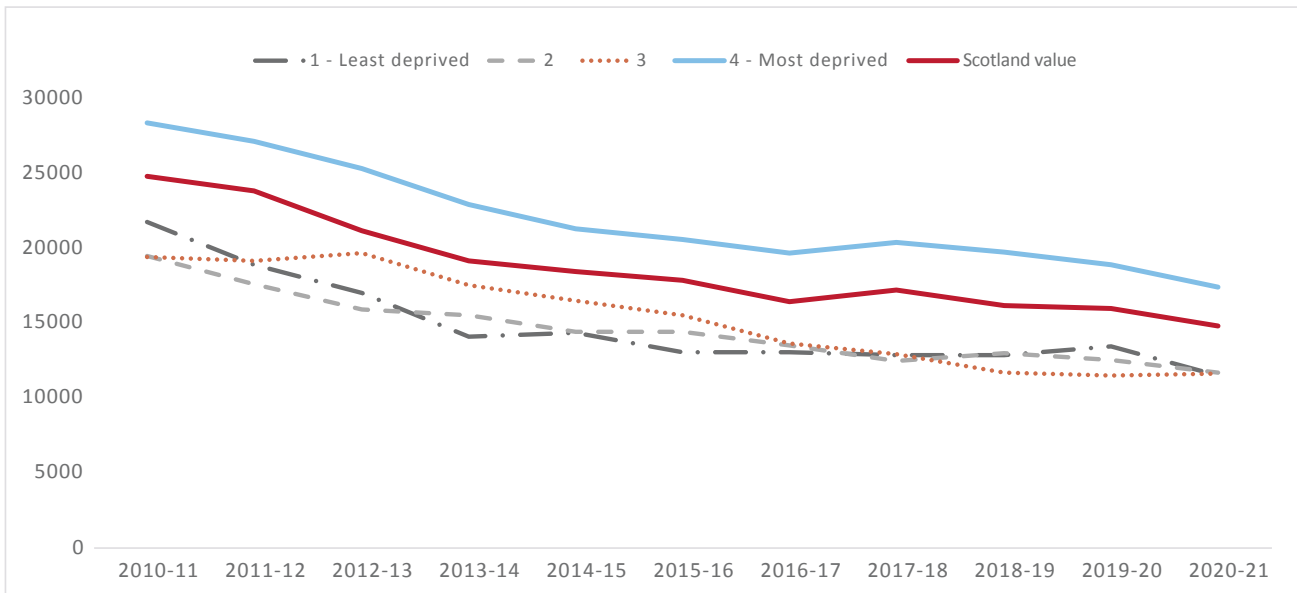
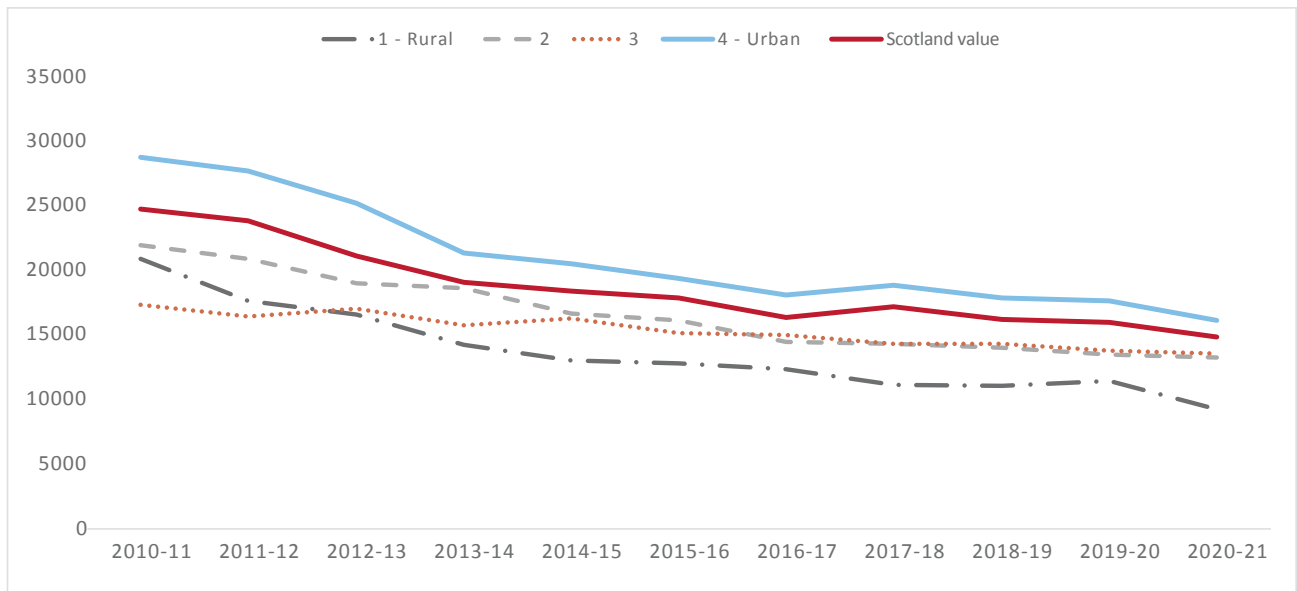


Fig 97: Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (£) by family group - rurality



Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning

The publication of Scottish Household Survey satisfaction data at council level has been delayed this year due to COVID related changes which were required to be introduced to the standard survey methodology in 2020. This change in methodology has introduced comparability issues in relation to data from previous



years which will need to be addressed in future publications. Satisfaction data for 2020/21 is therefore not currently available for inclusion in the LGBF.

Historic data reveals that as with other services, satisfaction levels for street collection have experienced a downward trend, reducing from 73.3% to 59.0% between 2010/11 and 2019/20. In the most recent 3 years, the rate of reduction has accelerated with satisfaction levels reducing by eleven percentage points between 2016/17 and 2019/20, including 3.9 percentage points in 2019/20. This declining trend is evident in all authorities except one.

Until 2015-16, it appeared that the substantial efficiencies that have been introduced in delivering this service did not appear to have had a significantly detrimental impact on public satisfaction, indicating the care taken to protect key areas of public concern. The significant recent reductions in satisfaction however indicate a shift in public perceptions in the context of continuing significant reductions in budgets.

Table 44: Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning

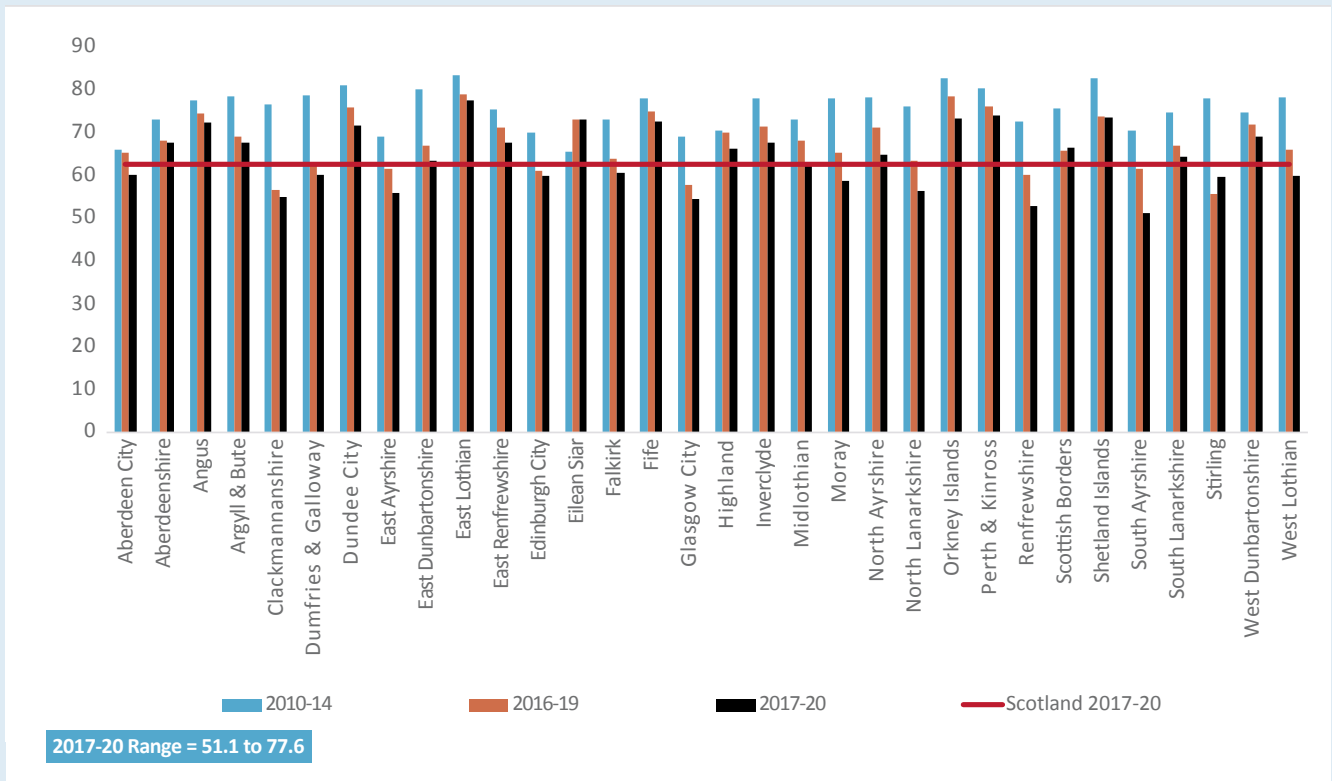
2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Value Change 2018-19 to 2019-20	Value Change 2010-11 to 2019-20
73.3	75.0	74.0	74.0	73.0	70.0	66.0	62.9	59.0	dna	-3.9	-14.3

As noted previously, the satisfaction data is drawn from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) and while proportionate at Scotland level, there are limitations at local authority level in relation to the small sample sizes and low confidence levels. To boost sample sizes, 3-year rolled averages have been used to ensure the required level of precision at local levels. From 2018/19, questions used in the LGBF have also been included in the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ) which provides a boosted sample size.

There is significant and widening variation in satisfaction levels across Scotland, ranging from 51.1% to 77.6%. Satisfaction levels are significantly higher in the least deprived authorities compared to the most deprived authorities (67% compared to 64%).

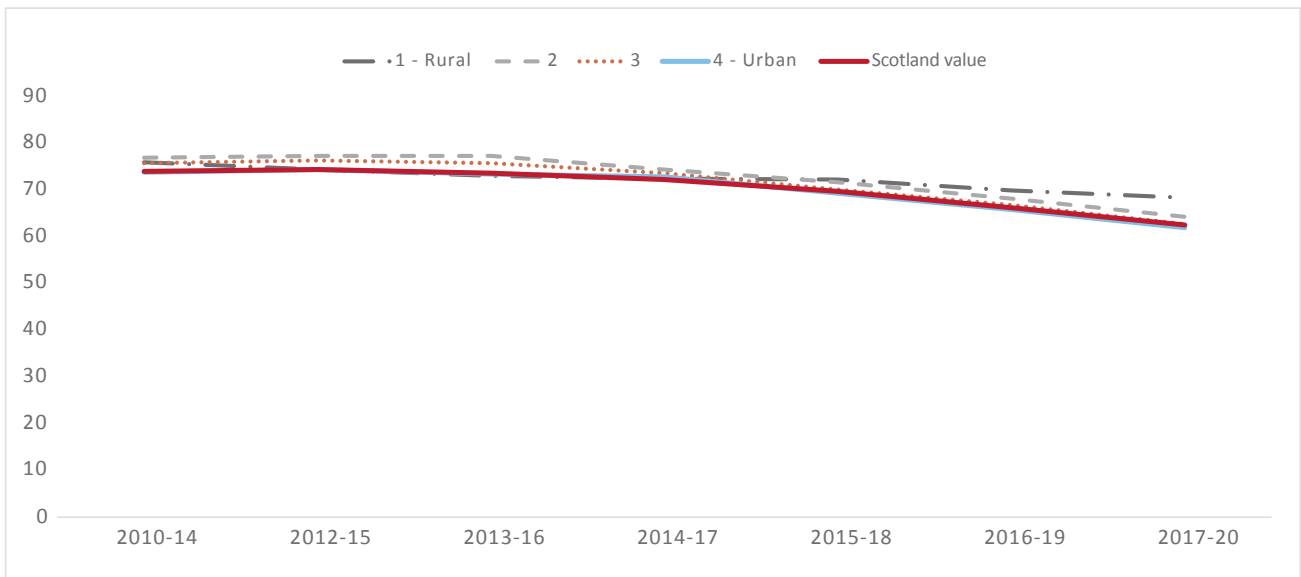


Fig 98: Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning



Source: Scottish Household Survey

Fig 99: Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning by family group





Roads

The impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on roads services has resulted in a reduction in planned work and a reliance on reactive repairs of defects to keep road networks safe, and this will inevitably lead to a backlog of repair work and a reduction in overall network condition and satisfaction.

Across the period, there have been significant reductions in expenditure on roads (-28%), while the condition has remained largely unchanged. While it is reassuring that conditions have so far remained relatively static, road condition will generally fall in years following budget reductions, following a lack of investment. Continued close monitoring will be essential to assess the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on backlogs and roads conditions combined with these significant recent funding reductions.

Roads costs are represented in this framework using a cost of roads per kilometre measure. This measure includes both revenue and capital expenditure. The condition of the roads network is represented by the percentage of roads in various classes which require maintenance treatment.

For the 11 years for which we have data, the Scottish average cost per kilometre has reduced by 30.2% from £13,850 to £9,667. This includes a cost reduction of 6.6% in 2020/21. There is significant variation beneath the Scotland trend, with five councils reporting an increase in costs since 2010/11, and a quarter reporting an increase in costs in 2020/21. Urban authorities are most likely to have seen their costs increase in the most recent year, with average costs increasing by 19% compared to 24% decrease for the most rural family group.

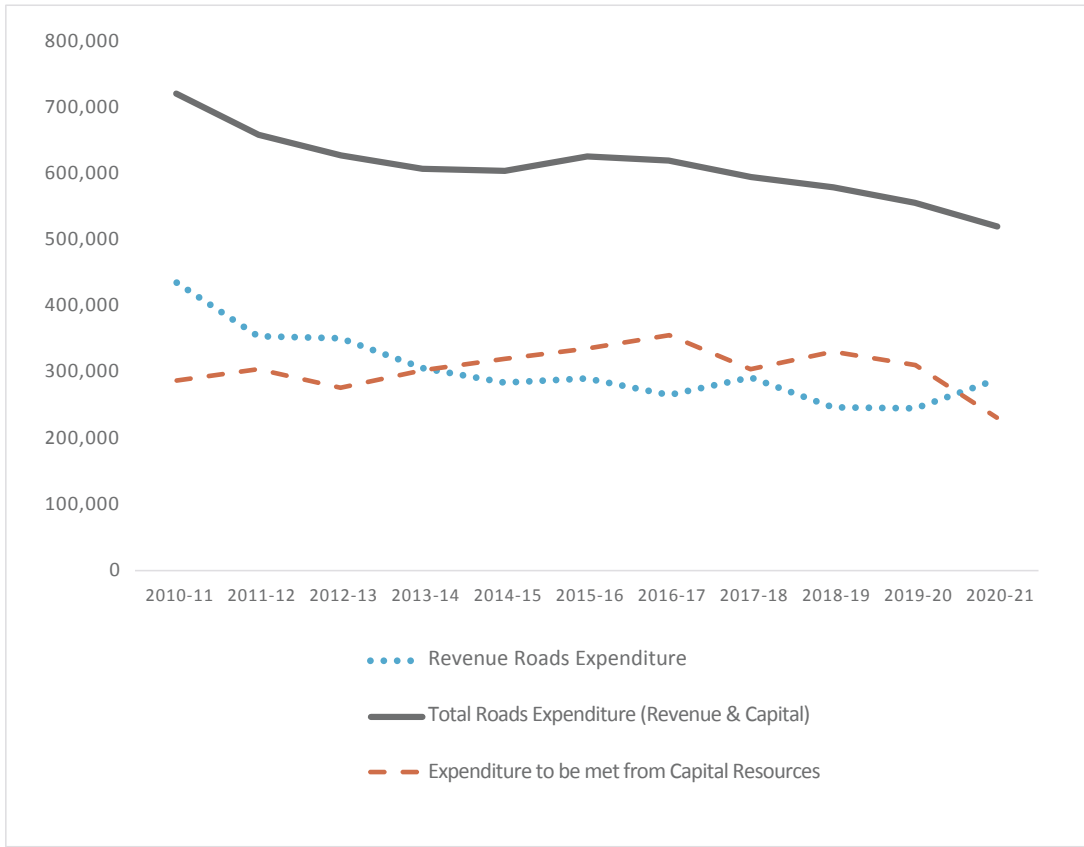
Table 45: Cost of roads per kilometre - (£)

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Change 2019-20 to 2020-21	% Change 2010-11 to 2020-21
13,850	12,613	11,988	11,568	11,476	11,838	11,711	11,241	10,835	10,355	9,667	-6.6%	-30.2%

As the graph below shows, overall revenue expenditure on roads has reduced significantly, by 33.9%, since 2010/11, while capital expenditure has decreased by 19% across the period. In 2020/21, revenue expenditure has grown by 17.6% while capital expenditure has fallen by -25.6%.



Fig 100: Roads expenditure - revenue and capital (£)



The variation in roads costs across Scotland is significant, and has widened substantially in 2020/21. In 2020/21, costs ranged from £3,021 to £30,760 (excluding outliers). Variation across councils is systematically related to rurality, with significantly higher and rising costs in urban areas compared to the most rural areas (£22,841 compared to £4,726).

Fig 101: Cost of roads per kilometre (£) by family group - rurality

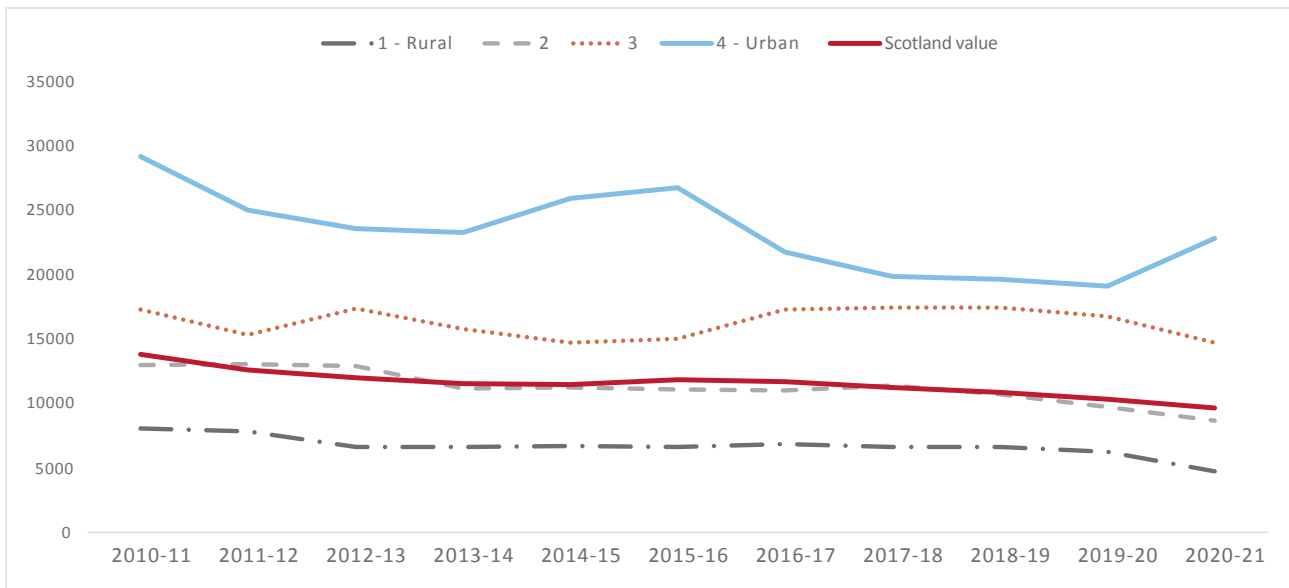
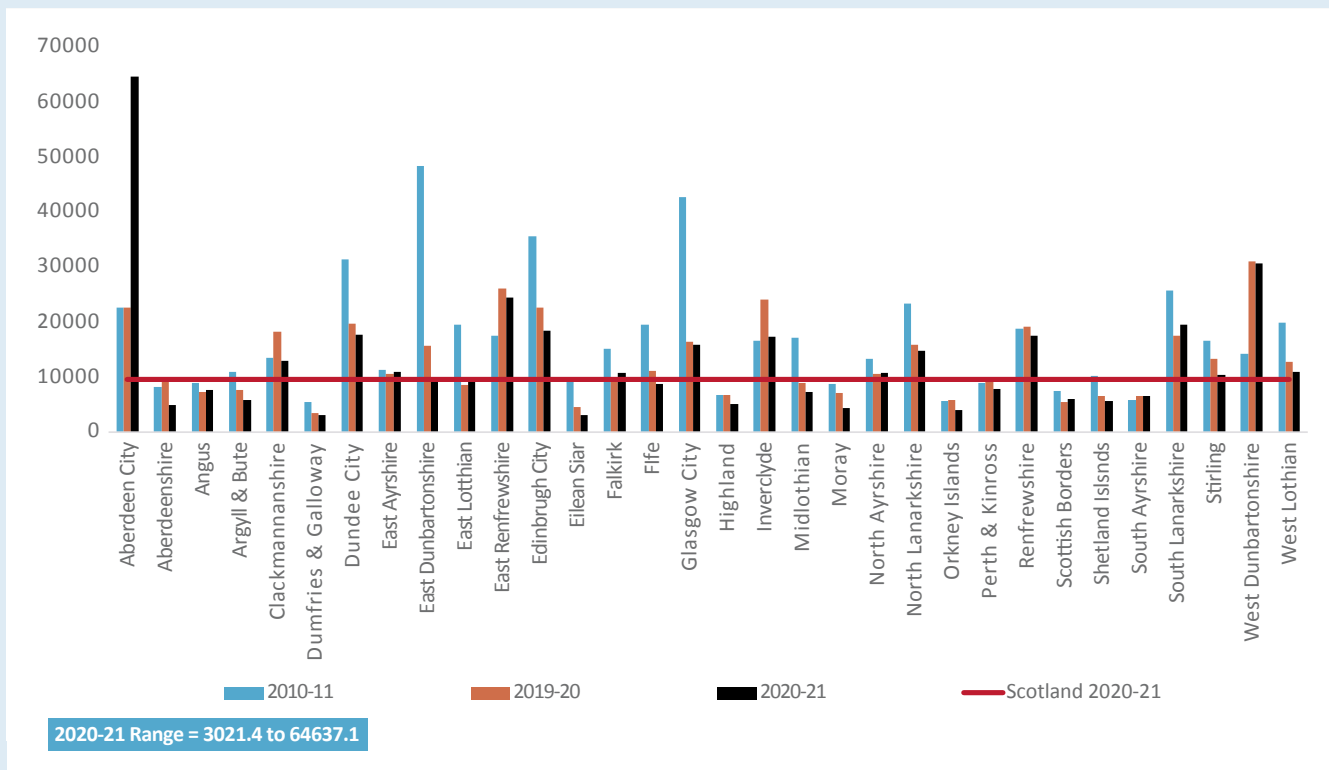




Fig 102: Cost of roads per kilometre (£)



Source: Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) / Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) returns; council supplied expenditure figures. Aberdeen outlying figure reflects additional expenditure on Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.



Local Variation – Cost of roads per kilometre

2020/21 Value

Scotland value: £9,667; council range: £3,021 - £64,637 (£3,021 - £30,760 excluding outliers). Widening variation in the last year, widest since base year. Cost are significantly higher for urban authorities (£22,841 compared to £4,726).

Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland: -6.6%; councils: 8 increased and 24 decreased; range: -48.3% to +186.1% (-48.3% to +15.7% excluding outliers)

Since 2010/11: Scotland: -30.2%; councils: 5 increased and 27 decreased; range -79.9% to +186.50. (-79.9% to +38.9% excluding outliers)

In terms of the condition of the road network, the 11-year period covered by this report has seen very little change in the A, B and C class road network overall, with around 30% to 35% of roads continuing to require maintenance. This indicates that despite the significant reductions on spending, the condition of key parts of the roads networks has been maintained.

In 2020/21, there have been small improvements in A, B and C class roads overall. This improving trend is however not universal. Between a quarter and a third of councils report deterioration in roads conditions in the most recent year across A, B and C classes, a trend most apparent for urban authorities.



It is important to note that data from 2020/21 refers to the first year where a change was introduced to the survey methodology, where a new filter was applied to remove invalid spike readings in the texture results. This had the effect of improving road network condition. While reduced traffic volumes and targeting of repair works during the COVID-19 period will also have had an impact, the main “improvement” in reported condition is attributable to the filter that was applied. It is also possible that milder winters (a result of climate change) are resulting in improvements in condition, especially for authorities where more severe winters have impacted in previous years.

While the initial cuts to roads budgets were, in many cases, mitigated by moving maintenance expenditure to capital, everything that can be moved has been moved. It is therefore now cyclic and routine maintenance that is bearing the brunt of the expenditure reductions. While most of this work can be viewed as low level and without any immediate visual effect e.g. gully and ditch cleaning, this however has serious long-term maintenance consequences. The change in weather patterns has exacerbated the drainage issues resulting from these reductions. The extreme rain events the country has been subjected to has had a catastrophic effect on transport infrastructure, not just roads, across all areas of Scotland.

Table 46: Percentage of A, B, C class and Unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance

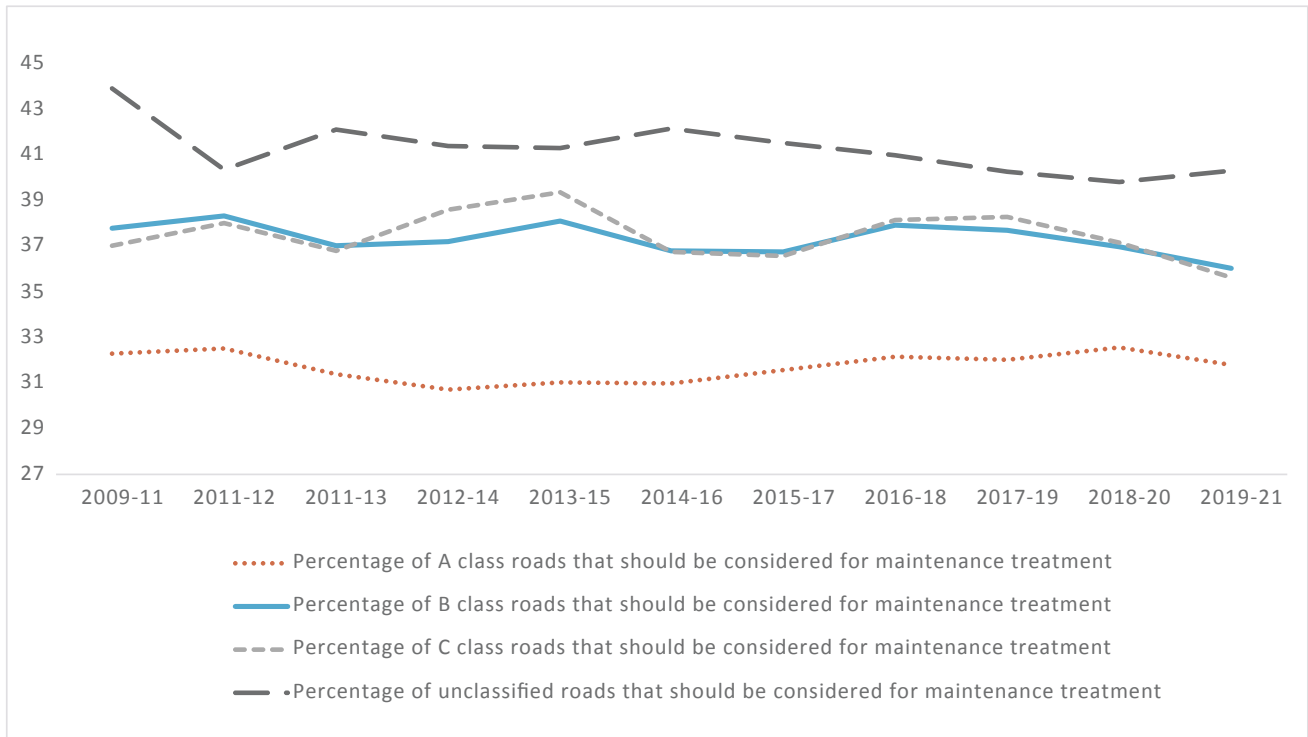
	2009-11	2010-12	2011-13	2012-14	2013-15	2014-16	2015-17	2016-18	2017-19	2018-20	2019-21	Value Change 2018-20 to 2019-21	Value Change 2009-11 to 2019-21
% A Class Roads	30.3	30.5	29.4	28.7	29.0	29.0	29.5	30.2	30.0	30.6	29.8	-0.8	-0.5
% B Class Roads	35.8	36.3	35.0	35.2	36.1	34.8	34.8	35.9	35.7	35.0	34.0	-1.0	-1.8
% C Class Roads	35.0	36.0	34.8	36.6	37.4	34.7	34.6	36.2	36.3	35.1	33.6	-1.5	-1.4
% Unclassified Roads	41.9	38.3	40.1	39.4	39.3	40.1	39.5	39.0	38.2	37.8	38.3	0.5	-3.6

Source: Roads Asset Management Database, Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS)

The variation in condition varies significantly across Scotland for all classes of road, however this has narrowed since the base year. In 2019/21, the range for A class roads is 16% to 40%; B class roads is 18% to 60%; C class roads is 14% to 56%; and for unclassified roads the range is 24% to 59%. The condition of roads in urban areas is better than that in rural areas (25-26% requiring maintenance compared to 30-36% requiring maintenance). This relationship is no longer statistically significant following faster improvements in the rural roads network (and deterioration in the urban network). Overall better roads condition in urban areas may reflect the historic pattern of higher spend in urban areas (although this has reduced to the average), although further exploration would be required to understand what, if any relationship, exists between these two factors.



Fig 103: Percentage of A, B, C class and unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance

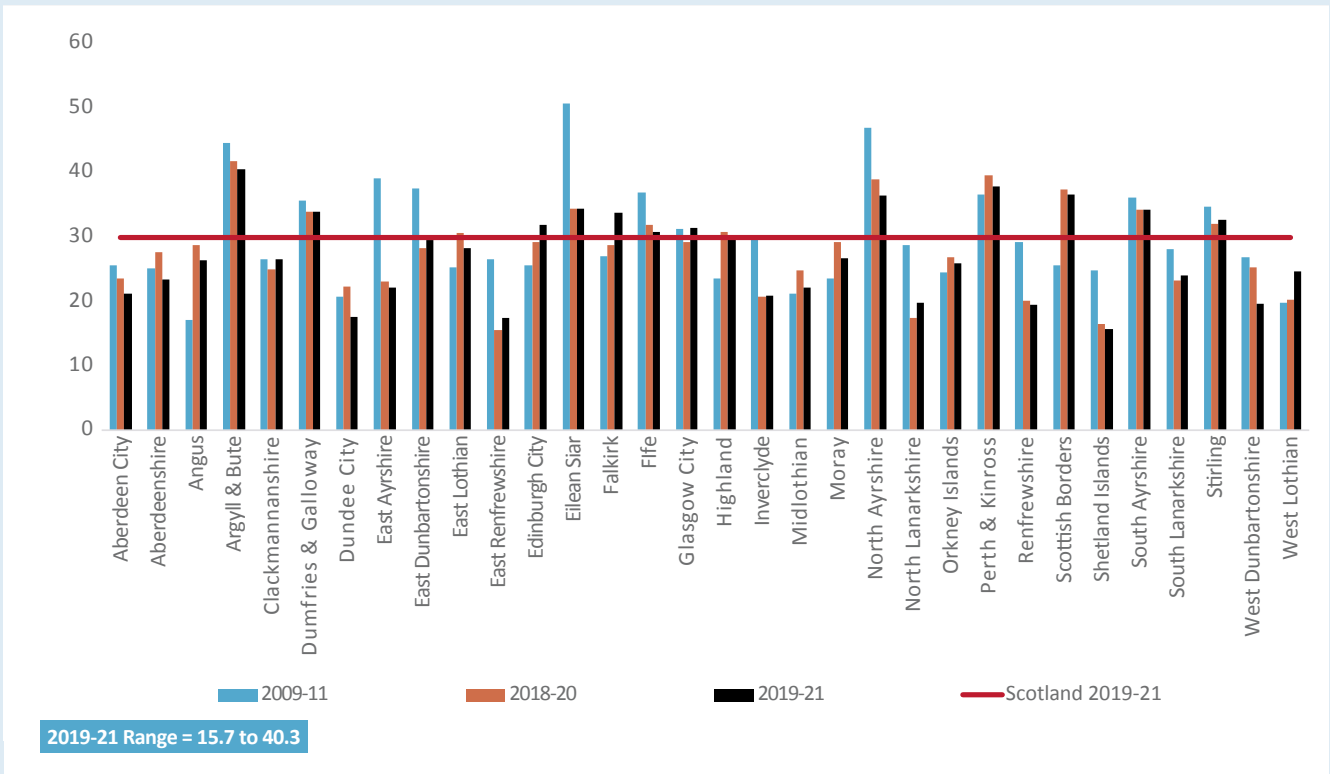


For the recent 2-year period 2019 – 2021, the national picture is one of improvement or maintenance in terms of the overall road condition. This could be reflective of capital investment allowing roads to be maintained to a steady state level. However, almost all authorities have seen a decline in at least one element of their local road network (A, B or C class roads) during this time, thereby reflecting the gradual decline in revenue investment generally over the longer term, restricting cyclical maintenance work such as drainage maintenance which can have a detrimental effect on the life of the road.

Many local roads authorities are adapting to manage declining investment levels, by using alternative road resurfacing techniques and processes that, whilst providing a short-term improvement in condition, aren't as preventative to decline as some of the treatments that may have been chosen in the past. However, the alternative road resurfacing techniques, whilst less expensive initially, don't result in the same lifespan as treatments that may be preferred, thereby requiring further intervention/expenditure at an earlier stage.



Fig 104: Percentage of A class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment



Local Variation – Percentage of A Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

2019/21 Value

Scotland: 29.8%; council range: 15.7% - 40.3%. Roads condition is better in urban authorities compared to rural authorities (25% compared to 30%, not statistically significant)

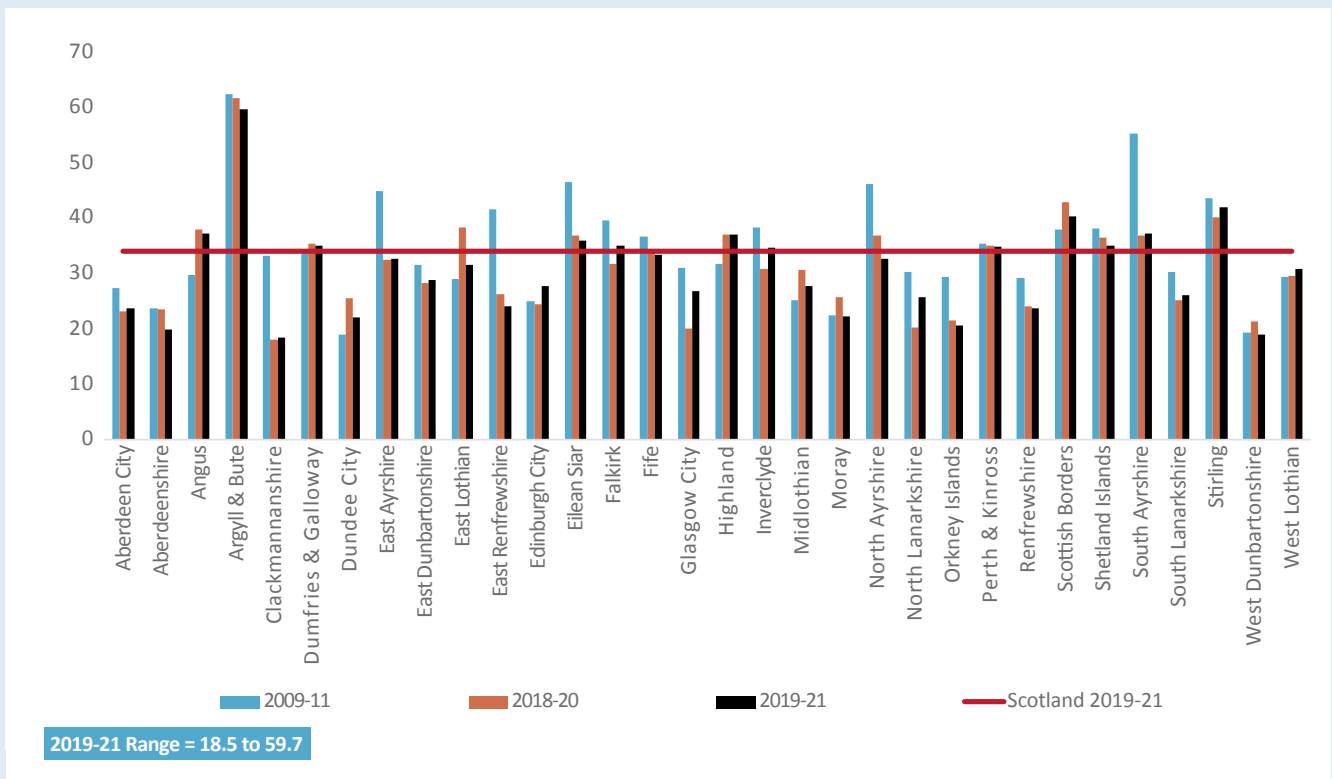
Change Over Time

In 2019/21: Scotland -0.8pp; councils: 11 increased and 21 decreased (range: -5.8pp to +4.9pp).

Since 2009/11: Scotland -16.8pp; councils: 9 increased and 23 decreased (range: -16.8pp to +11.0pp).



Fig 105: Percentage of B class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment



Local Variation – Percentage of B Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

2019/21 Value

Scotland: 34%; council range: 18.5% - 59.7%. Variation narrowed in the most recent year. Roads condition is better in urban authorities compared to rural authorities (26% compared to 35%, no longer statistically significant)

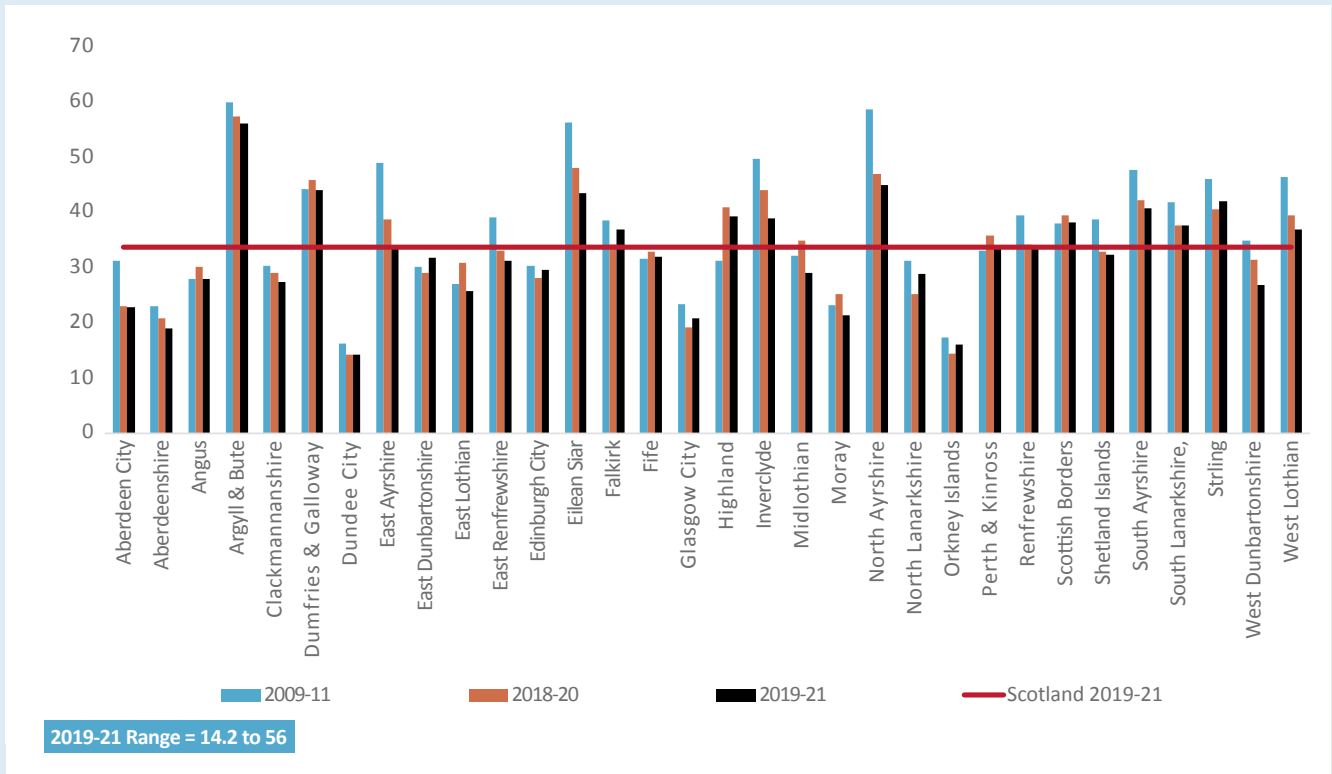
Change Over Time

In 2019/21: Scotland -0.96pp; councils: 14 increased and 18 decreased (range: -6.8pp to +6.8pp).

Since 2009/11: Scotland -1.8pp; councils: 9 increased and councils 23 decreased (range: -18.0pp to +7.5pp).



Fig 106: Percentage of C class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment



Local Variation – Percentage of C Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

2019/21 Value

Scotland: 33.6%; council range: 14.2% - 56%. Narrowing variation in the most recent year. Roads condition is better in urban authorities compared to rural authorities (26% compared to 36%, not statistically significant)

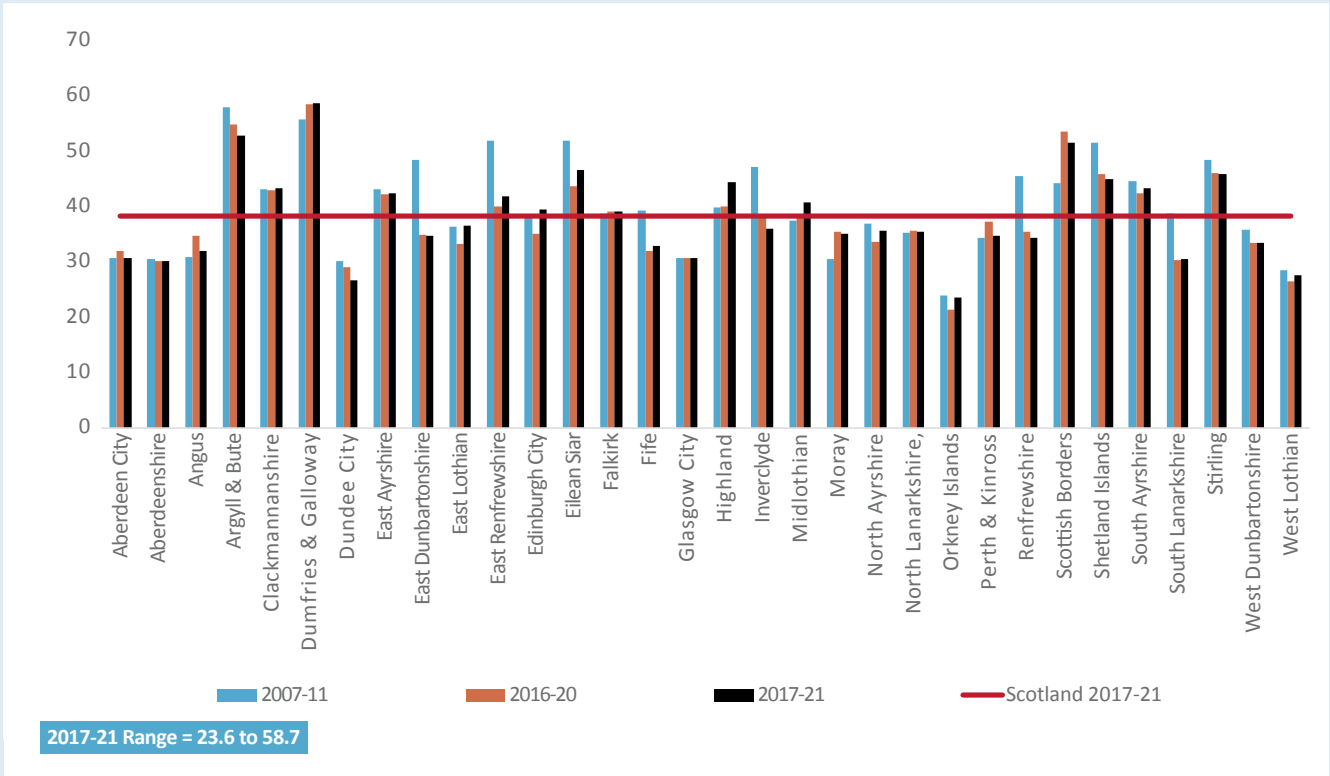
Change Over Time

In 2019/21: Scotland -1.54pp; councils: 7 increased and 25 decreased (range: -5.7pp to +3.7pp).

Since 2009/11: Scotland -1.4pp; councils: 5 increased and councils 27 decreased (range: -11.7pp to +9.54pp).



Fig 107: Percentage of unclassified roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment



Local Variation – Percentage of U Class roads that should be considered for maintenance treatment

2017/21 Value

Scotland: 38.3%; council range: 23.6% - 58.7%. Roads condition is better in urban authorities compared to rural authorities (34% compared to 44%, not statistically significant)

Change Over Time

In 2017/21: Scotland -0.5pp; councils: 17 increased and 15 decreased (range: -2.7pp to +4.3pp).

Since 2007/11: Scotland -1.8pp; councils: 13 increased and councils 19 decreased (range: -15.2pp to +7.9pp).



Environmental health and trading standards

Since 2010/11, the aggregated environmental health, trading standards, money advice and Citizens' Advice grant costs have reduced by 39.2% from £30,386 to £18,463. At the same time, demand for these services is increasing in terms of reactive complaints and proactive business support and interventions. There have been considerable demands on environment health to prepare for the impact of EU Exit, and in particular export health certification. Additional demand through COVID enforcement responsibilities and public health protection work has further added to the challenges facing this sector during this period. It will be critical to monitor the position of both trading standards and environmental health services going forward to understand what the impact will be of continuing reduction in funding alongside exceptional pressures on workload within enforcement sectors generated by issues such as the pandemic and EU exit.

In 2012/13, the framework split measures to enable a better understanding of trends. Trading standards costs include trading standards, money advice and citizen's advice and have been standardised within the framework as costs per 1,000 population. Since 2012/13, the cost of these services, while volatile, has reduced by 5.1%, from £6,173 to £5,837. In 2020/21, costs reduced by 7.7%, from £6,349 to £5,857. This pattern is not evident for all councils. 13 authorities reported increased costs since 2012/13, and 4 authorities reported increased costs in 2020/21, counter to the national trend.

The data should not be taken as an indication of local authority trading standards resource alone, which has fallen close to minimum levels as highlighted by Audit Scotland reports in 2002 and 2013.

In 2020/21 costs ranged from £1,891 to £14,386. The graph below reveals higher average costs for rural councils compared to urban councils (£8,835 compared to £6,113). However, there is no statistically significant relationship with rurality due to variation within the family group.

Across this same period, there was a 35.6% reduction in the cost of environmental health services per 1,000 population, from £19,579 in 2012/13 to £12,606 in 2020/21. In the most recent 12 months, the reduction in costs has accelerated, falling by 14.2% from £14,695 to £12,606. While all 32 authorities report a decrease in costs since 2012/13, 7 report an increase in the most recent year counter to the national trend.

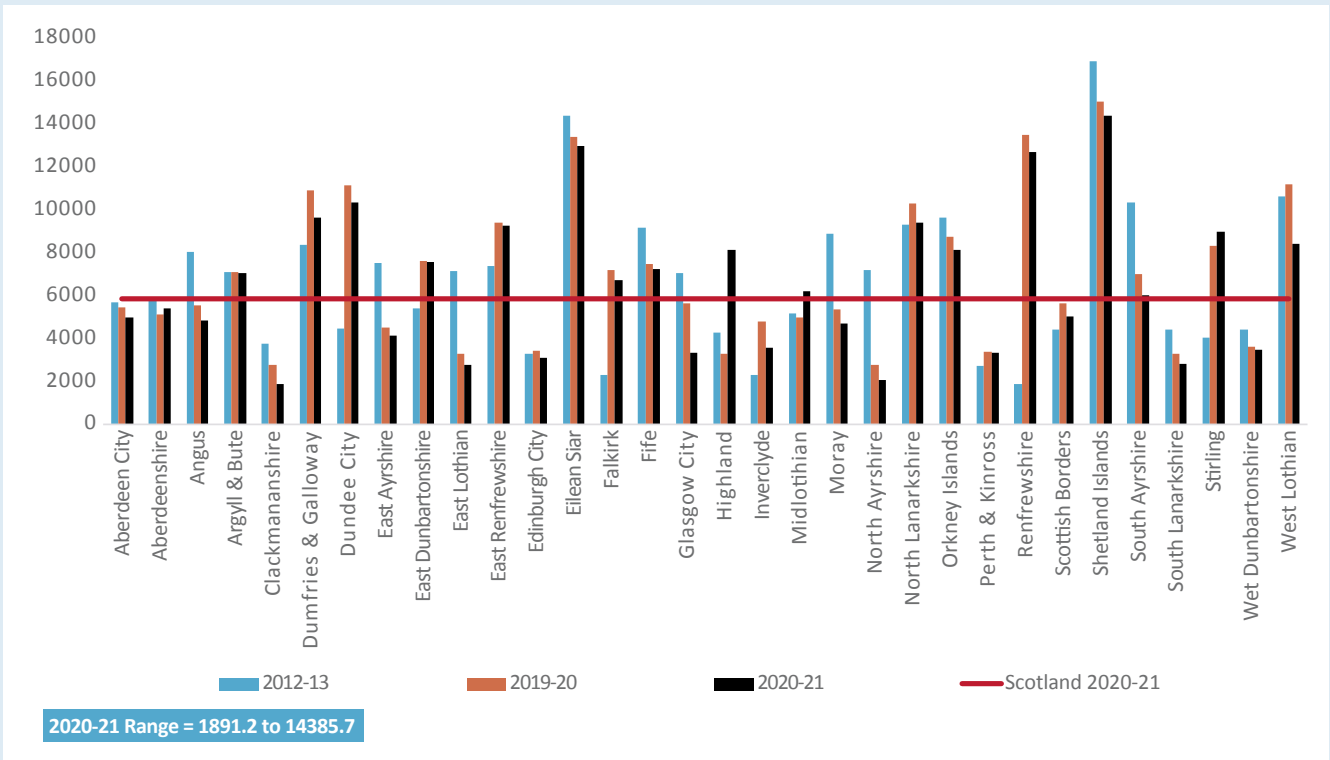
There is significant variation across councils which has widened in the past 12 months, with costs ranging from £6,661 to £37,472. As with Trading Standards, the graph below reveals higher average environmental health costs for rural councils compared to urban councils (£19,218 compared to £14,056). However, there is no statistically significant relationship with rurality due to variation within the family group.

Table 47: Cost of trading standards and environmental health per 1,000 population - (£)

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Change 2019-20 to 2020-21	% Change 2012-13 to 2020-21
Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizens Advice	6,173	6,607	6,518	6,643	6,224	6,560	6,434	6,349	5,857	-7.7%	-5.1%
Environmental Health	19,579	20,367	19,436	19,231	17,992	17,258	16,242	14,695	12,606	-14.2%	-35.6%



Fig 108: Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population (£)



Source: Mid-year population estimates, National Records Scotland (NRS); council supplied expenditure figures



Local Variation – Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population

2020/21 Value

Scotland: £5,857; council range: £1,891 - £14,385. Narrowed variation in the latest year. Higher costs in rural councils compared to urban councils (£8,835 compared to £6,113, not statistically significant)

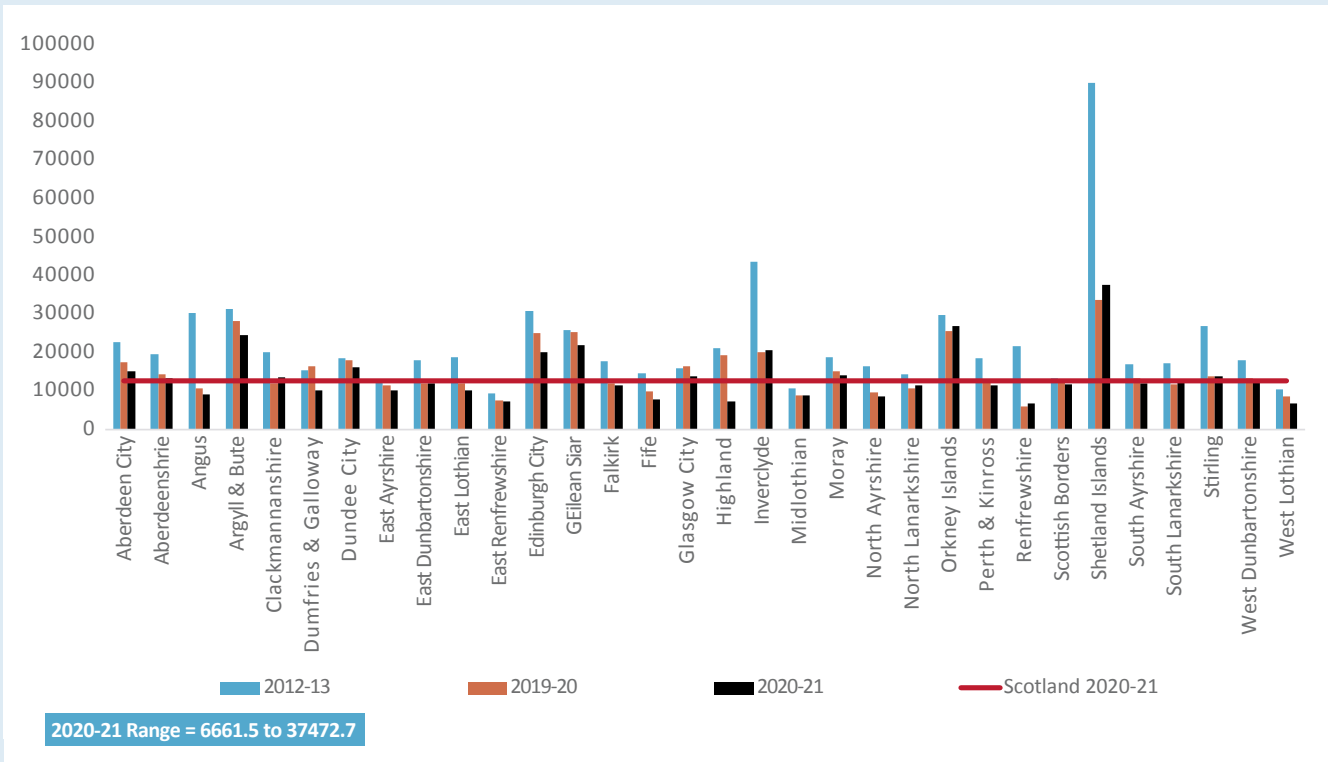
Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland -7.7%. councils: 4 increased and 28 decreased (range: -40.9% to +148.3%).

Since 2012/13: Scotland -5.1%. councils: 13 increased and 19 decreased (range: -71.1% to +572.5%)



Fig 109: Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population (£)



Source: Mid-year population estimates, National Records Scotland (NRS); council supplied expenditure figures



Local Variation – Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population

2020/21 Value

Scotland: £12,606; council range: £6,661 - £37,472. Widening variation in the latest year. Higher costs in rural councils compared to urban councils (£19,218 compared to £14,056, not statistically significant)

Change Over Time

In 2020/21: Scotland -14.2%. councils: 7 increased and 25 decreased (range: -61.5% to +13.7%).

Since 2012/13: Scotland -35.6%. All 32 councils decreased (range: -69.9% to -9.5%)



Fig 110: Cost of trading standards per 1,000 population (£) by family group - rurality

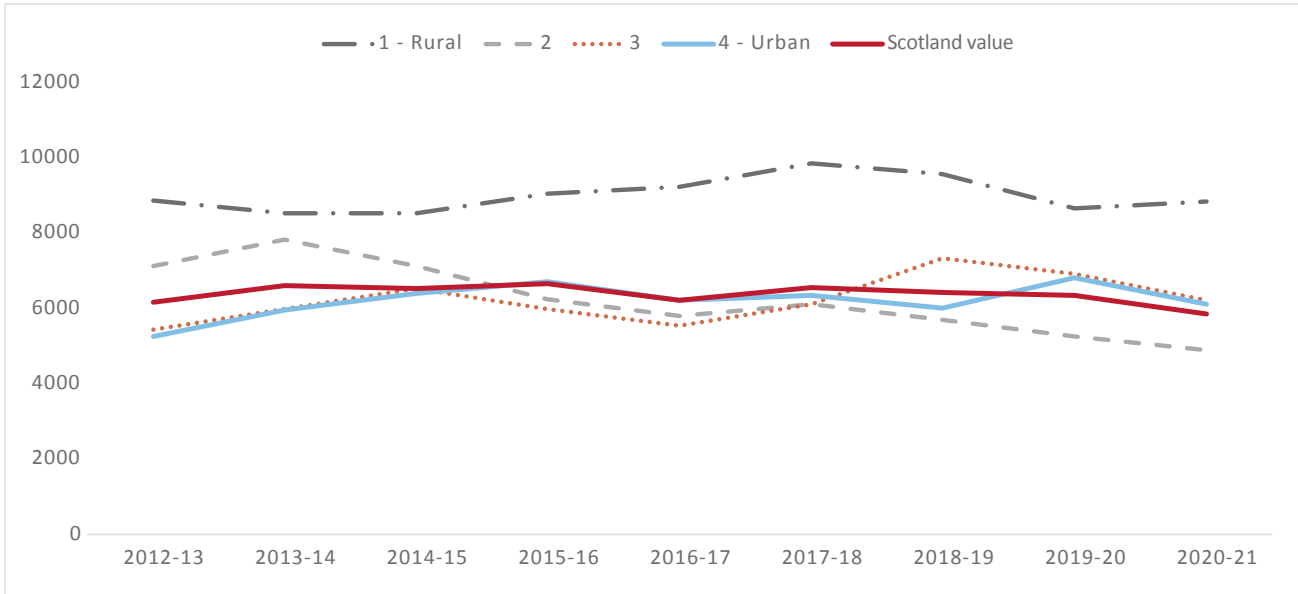
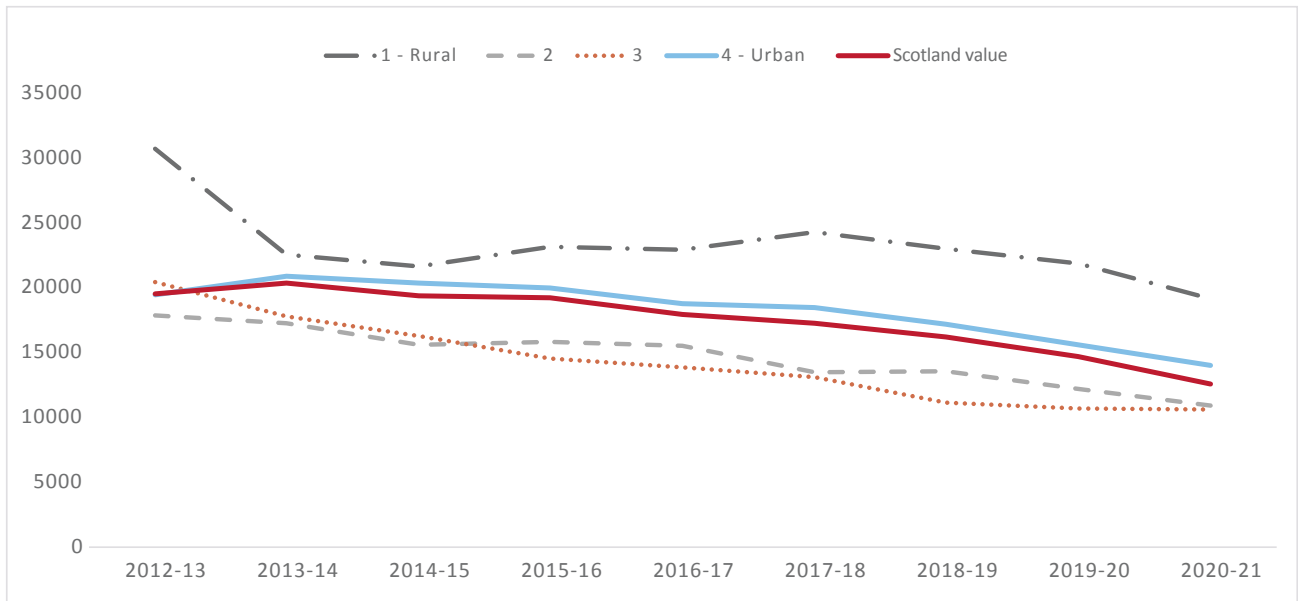


Fig 111: Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population (£) by family group - rurality





Work within Family Groups has identified the following factors as important in understanding the variation between authorities in environmental services:

- *Local political/strategic priority given to the role of environmental services in supporting improvements in wider outcomes and tackling inequalities*
- *Workforce composition and demographic profile*
- *Working practices, e.g. shift patterns*
- *Service integration (e.g. waste management, roads, street cleaning, parks services)*
- *Collection programmes, frequencies and model of service*
- *Asset management approaches – e.g. super depots and leased vehicles*
- *Stage in investment cycle*
- *Whether councils have landfills in their authority area which will require investment up to and beyond their closure dates over the next five years.*
- *Contract and procurement costs*
- *Access to external funding streams*