

Environmental & regulatory services

Performance Indicators 2003/04

Comparing the performance of Scottish councils

Prepared for the Accounts Commission

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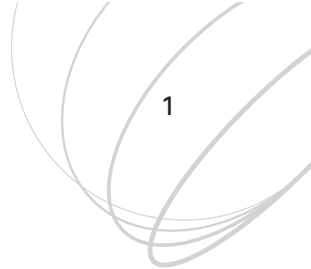
The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is a statutory, independent body which, through the audit process, assists local authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. The Commission has four main responsibilities:

- securing the external audit including the audit of Best Value and community planning
- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
- carrying out national Best Value studies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local government
- issuing an annual direction to local authorities which sets out the range of performance information they are required to publish.

The Commission secures the audit of 32 councils and 34 joint boards (including police and fire services). Local authorities spend over £9 billion of public funds a year.

Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Executive and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.



Main findings

Methods of waste disposal

Indicator 1 Page 4

Councils reported that around 1.8 million tonnes of biodegradable waste was used for landfill, a slight increase compared with last year (1.78 million tonnes). The target is to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste to 1.5 million tonnes by 2006.

Councils recycled and composted 12.3% of waste in 2003/04, an increase of 2.7% compared with the previous year (9.6%). The target is to recycle 25% by 2006.

Refuse collection and disposal costs

Indicator 2 Page 7

Across Scotland, the average gross cost of refuse collection per property was £52.59, an increase (4%) compared with the previous year. Costs varied from £32 in South Ayrshire to £70 in Argyll & Bute.

The average gross cost of refuse disposal per property was £58.43, an increase of 6% compared with the previous year and a 31% increase since 2000/01. Costs of disposal varied widely from £35 in North Ayrshire to £115 in Argyll & Bute.

Food hygiene inspections

Indicator 3 Page 11

Over 94% of food hygiene inspections within the two highest risk categories were carried out within the target time, a similar percentage to previous years. Twenty-five of the 31 councils that reported reliable information (excluding Shetland Islands) carried out at least nine in every ten inspections within the target time.

Planning applications

Indicator 4 Page 15

In 2003/04, 64% of all planning applications were determined within two months, a reduction compared with the previous year (67%). The Scottish Executive's Planning Guideline of determining 80% within two months was introduced in 2000.

Clackmannanshire was the only council to meet the guideline for all applications.

Councils reported that they dealt with:

- 80% of householder applications within two months, a reduction compared with the previous year (83%)
- 49% of non-householder applications within two months, a reduction compared with the previous year (53%).

Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands reported unreliable information for this indicator.

Road network condition

Indicator 5 Page 18

Across Scotland, around 45% of the road network is either in need of repair or requiring further investigation. The proportion varied widely between councils from 23% in West Lothian to 62% in the City of Edinburgh.

Repairs to faulty street and traffic lights

Indicator 6 Page 21

In 2003/04, councils reported that they carried out 94% of repairs to faulty street lights within seven days, an increase compared with the previous year (91%). The proportion of repairs carried out within seven days varied among councils from 63% in Shetland Islands to 100% in South Lanarkshire.

Across Scotland, 93% of repairs to traffic lights were carried out within 48 hours, which continues the year-on-year improvement over the past six years. Repairs carried out within the target time varied from none in Shetland Islands to 100% in Argyll & Bute, Dundee City, Moray and Scottish Borders.

Noise complaints

Indicator 7 Page 25

In 2003/04, Scottish councils received slightly over 10,300 noise complaints. They dealt with 2,300 at first point of contact to the satisfaction of the complainer, and 8,000 required further investigation.

Overall, 65% of complaints were settled within 14 days, ranging from 13% in Scottish Borders to 99% in Aberdeenshire.

Introduction

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www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance

Each year councils publish a range of information to show people how well they are providing their services and how they compare with other bodies.

This pamphlet contains information on seven indicators relating to councils' management of environmental and regulatory services. The indicators are:

- methods of household waste disposal
- refuse collection and disposal costs
- the proportion of food hygiene inspections undertaken within target time
- the proportion of planning applications processed within target time
- the proportion of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment
- the time taken to repair faulty street lights and faulty traffic lights
- the number and proportion of noise complaints that were settled within 14 days of receipt.

Using the information

Several factors affect the way a council performs its activities. You need to be aware of these in order to understand why results may vary. Some of these factors are outwith the control of a council - for example, population size and density, geographical area, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to the service or the groups of people it serves. These local factors may mean that a council with a performance which, at first sight, appears to be worse than that of another has, in fact, done better given the circumstances it faces.

The statutory performance indicators cover key aspects of the performance of council services. Further information that may be of assistance in assessing the performance of these services can be found on each council's web site. The following websites also contain useful information:

Scottish Executive
www.scotland.gov.uk

Scottish Environment Protection Agency
www.sepa.org.uk

Food Standards Agency
www.food.gov.uk/scotland

In this pamphlet we have shown information for councils for 2003/04 and where appropriate made comparison with previous years.

Key

Councils have a statutory obligation to report the information for each indicator. In cases where a council has failed to do so it is shown in the narrative and tables for the relevant indicator as 'failed to report'.

Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission have reviewed authorities' arrangements for producing performance information. An asterisk (*) against the data for a council indicates that the auditor expressed doubts about the reliability of its arrangements for producing the information. In such cases we have shown the information separately and have not included it in the calculation of overall Scottish averages, although such information was included prior to 2001/02.

Other pamphlets published by the Commission cover:

Corporate management
Cultural and community services
Education and Children's services
Housing and social work services
Police and fire services

For 2003/04 the Commission will be reporting 77 indicators of the performance of council, fire and police services. The publication process will involve:

- six published pamphlets featuring 48 indicators
- a compendium of information on all 77 indicators on the Commission's website
- individual council profiles on the website.

The indicators are selected by the Commission according to criteria identified in consultation with CoSLA, SOLACE, the Scottish Consumer Council and the Scottish Executive. They are kept under review and the Commission consults about any changes it considers making. The Commission will review its approach to statutory performance indicators in the light of the new requirement on councils to report their performance publicly, and the new Best Value audits of each council and police and fire authority.

Indicator 1: Waste disposal

The methods of disposal of household, commercial and industrial waste and the proportion that was recycled.

This indicator shows the proportion of waste that was used for landfill, recycled or used for other recovery purposes including energy from waste.

Recycling and recovery methods include waste used for the recovery of heat, power and other energy sources, composting, and the reuse of ash following waste incineration.

Points to bear in mind

The Scottish Executive has set targets for councils to achieve by 2006:

- Reduction in landfilling of biodegradable waste to 1.5 million tonnes.
- Increase in the amount of waste that is recycled or composted to 25%.

Commentary

Local authorities collected 3.3 million tonnes of waste in 2003/04 ([Table 1a](#)) compared with 3.2 million tonnes the previous year. Household waste accounted for 2.66 million tonnes (80% of all waste collected). On average, each household produces slightly over 1.1 tonne of refuse per year, while each trade and commercial property produces around six tonnes per year. One-third of all waste in Scotland is generated in four council areas (City of Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire).

Landfill

Councils reported that around 1.8 million tonnes of biodegradable waste was used for landfill, a slight increase compared with last year (1.78 million tonnes). The target is to reduce the amount to 1.5 million tonnes by 2006.

Twelve councils reported that 90% or more of their waste goes to landfill sites.

Recycling

Councils recycled and composted 12.3% of waste in 2003/04, an increase of 2.7% compared with the previous year (9.6%). Materials such as glass and paper accounted for 9% of recycling, green waste used for composting accounted for 3%, and 0.3% was ash recycled and used in the construction industry. The amount of waste recycled varied widely, ranging from 3.8% in Dumfries & Galloway to 25.1% in Angus. Four councils (Angus, East Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and Dundee City) recycled more than 20% of their waste. Thirty of the 32 councils increased recycling compared with previous years, with only Aberdeenshire and Dundee City reporting slight reductions ([Table 1b overleaf](#)). The four councils with the highest increase in recycling levels compared with the previous year were Fife (11.7%), Moray (6.1%), North Ayrshire (8%), and South Lanarkshire (5%).

Recovery of heat, power and other energy sources

There are two incineration plants in Scotland. One is used by Angus, Perth & Kinross and Dundee City, the other by Orkney and the Shetland Islands. These councils reported that 2.3% of the waste they collected was recovered for heat, power or other energy sources – a slight reduction compared with the previous year (2.5%). Three councils recycle ash which is used in the construction industry: Dundee City (8.1%), Angus (3.3%), and Perth & Kinross (0.4%).

Table 1a

The percentage and methods of household, commercial and industrial waste disposal – 2003/04

	Total tonnes (000s)	Landfill %	Total recycling %	Recovery of heat, power and other energy sources %
RURAL COUNCILS				
Aberdeenshire	145	87.0	12.6	
Argyll & Bute	63	89.7	10.3	
Dumfries & Galloway	92	96.2	3.8	
Eilean Siar	22	94.3	5.7	
Highland	149	94.2	5.8	
Orkney Islands	13	26.6	14.8	58.6
Perth & Kinross	96	79.6	18.9	1.6
Scottish Borders	75	90.0	10.0	
Shetland Islands	13	22.7	7.4	69.9
MIXED COUNCILS				
Angus	81	53.8	25.1	21.2
Clackmannanshire	37	92.1	7.9	
East Ayrshire	70	93.4	6.6	
East Lothian	61	86.4	13.6	
East Renfrewshire	57	79.0	21.0	
Fife	252	83.1	16.9	
Inverclyde	45	94.0	6.0	
Midlothian	51	95.1	4.9	
Moray	67	81.7	18.3	
North Ayrshire	83	79.7	20.3	
South Ayrshire	87	87.2	12.8	
South Lanarkshire	178	82.6	17.4	
Stirling	59	85.7	14.3	
West Lothian	106	88.9	11.1	
URBAN COUNCILS				
Aberdeen City	132	90.7	9.3	
Dundee City	95	37.8	20.8	41.4
East Dunbartonshire	67	86.3	13.7	
Edinburgh, City of	261	88.5	11.5	
Falkirk	108	88.8	11.2	
Glasgow City	363	93.7	6.3	
North Lanarkshire	200	85.3	14.7	
Renfrewshire	110	90.1	9.9	
West Dunbartonshire	59	93.0	7.0	
Scotland	3,299	85.3	12.3	2.3

Table 1b

The percentage of waste recycled

	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02
Aberdeen City	9.3	7.5	5.7
Aberdeenshire	12.6	13.0	17.0
Angus	25.1	24.3	20.3
Argyll & Bute	10.3	9.1	7.7
Clackmannanshire	7.9	6.6	4.4
Dumfries & Galloway	3.8	3.6	*3.5
Dundee City	20.8	21.9	21.1
East Ayrshire	6.6	5.0	4.0
East Dunbartonshire	13.7	10.4	7.7
East Lothian	13.6	11.6	5.6
East Renfrewshire	21.0	14.5	12.2
Edinburgh, City of	11.5	7.7	5.0
Eilean Siar	5.7	5.0	1.9
Falkirk	11.2	6.8	5.6
Fife	16.9	5.2	2.2
Glasgow City	6.3	6.2	4.8
Highland	5.8	3.5	2.0
Inverclyde	6.0	5.8	4.0
Midlothian	4.9	4.1	3.8
Moray	18.3	12.2	6.6
North Ayrshire	20.3	12.3	5.8
North Lanarkshire	14.7	13.8	7.3
Orkney Islands	14.8	13.3	16.0
Perth & Kinross	18.9	17.7	15.8
Renfrewshire	9.9	8.4	5.0
Scottish Borders	10.0	9.7	13.6
Shetland Islands	7.4	5.6	10.3
South Ayrshire	12.8	10.7	5.1
South Lanarkshire	17.4	12.4	11.1
Stirling	14.3	10.2	8.4
West Dunbartonshire	7.0	6.6	6.1
West Lothian	11.1	9.8	5.8
Scotland	12.3	9.6	7.4

Indicator 2: Cost of refuse collection and disposal

The gross cost of refuse collection and disposal per property.

This indicator shows the overall cost per property to each council of collecting and disposing of refuse. This covers both domestic and commercial premises and includes the direct costs of collecting and disposing of refuse, for example depots, vehicles and the wages of the crews involved, together with indirect costs (eg, management overheads).

The Commission's report *Benchmarking refuse collection* (April 2000) arranged councils into family groups based on population dispersal and the number of properties served. Councils have been divided into three groups – urban, mixed urban/rural and rural – to allow fairer comparison to be made. These groupings have been used for the purposes of this indicator.

Points to bear in mind

The majority of councils collect domestic refuse once a week, though a small number collect twice a week, mainly for tenement and high rise flats. Commercial uplifts are generally carried out two or three times a week. Some councils undertake separate collections of garden refuse and waste paper.

New funding provided by the Scottish Executive to encourage councils to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill and do more, for example, segregation of waste for recycling purposes will lead to increases in the cost of collecting waste. The European Union landfill directive may also mean that councils incur higher costs disposing of waste.

Most councils use the wheeled bin method of collection. Alternative methods are the collection of static bins or sacks from backdoor or kerbside.

A council that has a population which is scattered over a wide geographical area is likely to incur higher cost than one with a relatively concentrated population. However, in urban areas traffic congestion and restricted access to collection points can increase costs.

The cost of waste disposal also includes, for example, landfill management, recycling plant and landfill tax.

The cost per property may be affected by the allocation of overhead costs to these functions. This should follow CIPFA guidance, but may nevertheless vary among councils.

Commentary

Refuse collection

Across Scotland, the average gross cost of refuse collection per property was £52.59, an increase of 4% compared with the previous year. Costs varied from £32 in South Ayrshire to £70 in Argyll & Bute (Table 2a). Six councils (Aberdeenshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Moray, South Ayrshire and Falkirk) reported gross costs per property of less than £45, while seven councils (Argyll & Bute, Clackmannanshire, City of Edinburgh, Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, and Stirling) reported gross costs per property of more than £60. Four of the seven councils with the highest cost per property are in the rural group of councils.

Twenty-two councils reported higher costs compared with the previous year, the highest increases were in Scottish Borders (11%), Midlothian (14%), Fife (17%), Clackmannanshire (20%), and South Lanarkshire (32%). Ten councils reported lower costs compared with the previous year.

Refuse disposal

The average gross cost per property for refuse disposal was £58.43, an increase of 6% compared with the previous year and a 31% increase since 2000/01. Costs of disposal varied widely from £35 in North Ayrshire to £115 in Argyll & Bute (Table 2b overleaf).

Nine councils reported costs of disposal above £70 per property, while Scottish Borders, North Ayrshire and North Lanarkshire reported costs below £40 per property. Seven of the nine councils with the highest costs are in the rural group of councils.

Twenty-two councils reported higher costs per property compared with the previous year. The highest increases were in Midlothian (18%), East Dunbartonshire (19%), South Ayrshire (17%), South Lanarkshire (28%), East Renfrewshire (56%), and Highland (70%).

Table 2a

The gross cost of refuse collection per property

	Refuse collection (£)				
	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02	2000/01	1999/2000
RURAL COUNCILS					
Aberdeenshire	37.25	35.45	33.63	31.16	34.58
Argyll & Bute	70.01	73.99	66.58	56.32	53.61
Dumfries & Galloway	49.38	49.12	*45.12	49.88	43.21
Eilean Siar	64.45	73.96	86.57	71.94	72.17
Highland	56.43	53.70	51.55	49.21	46.02
Orkney Islands	66.99	72.43	67.65	67.30	65.13
Perth & Kinross	59.58	58.10	53.58	51.81	49.43
Scottish Borders	49.92	44.87	38.56	38.70	37.00
Shetland Islands	64.02	73.06	59.75	39.49	48.38
MIXED COUNCILS					
Angus	50.66	47.80	44.46	36.19	35.97
Clackmannanshire	69.59	57.76	52.11	55.37	60.44
East Ayrshire	53.50	52.72	49.16	51.73	52.38
East Lothian	50.24	47.68	43.94	47.70	42.95
East Renfrewshire	43.49	43.72	42.23	40.54	41.88
Fife	53.09	45.43	*38.03	36.82	42.73
Inverclyde	44.13	45.57	43.55	44.65	43.62
Midlothian	48.98	43.00	40.93	39.57	37.69
Moray	44.14	43.89	35.26	46.94	39.66
North Ayrshire	49.46	47.58	46.19	45.28	43.64
South Ayrshire	32.58	35.93	45.00	39.85	37.11
South Lanarkshire	54.33	41.07	39.79	46.19	43.42
Stirling	62.57	58.21	62.52	62.56	61.47
West Lothian	51.35	52.73	48.57	46.43	41.68
URBAN COUNCILS					
Aberdeen City	46.94	45.85	41.98	41.30	42.41
Dundee City	57.45	55.70	47.65	46.98	53.22
East Dunbartonshire	51.68	49.17	46.20	45.46	42.90
Edinburgh, City of	61.99	60.78	54.41	49.04	48.29
Falkirk	41.70	39.61	37.60	35.29	34.15
Glasgow City	55.01	54.26	*49.95	49.42	48.22
North Lanarkshire	51.59	52.07	49.11	46.80	47.37
Renfrewshire	52.16	49.00	45.93	46.54	47.41
West Dunbartonshire	46.56	48.87	41.58	41.47	45.27
Scotland	52.59	50.43	46.94	45.63	45.23

Table 2b

The gross cost of refuse disposal per property

	Refuse disposal (£)			
	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02	2000/01
RURAL COUNCILS				
Aberdeenshire	84.03	74.74	65.56	64.46
Argyll & Bute	115.30	118.88	119.99	61.09
Dumfries & Galloway	58.04	59.95	*50.80	28.17
Eilean Siar	84.41	96.62	84.58	65.18
Highland	81.30	47.70	43.15	45.24
Orkney Islands	77.38	102.77	98.77	101.87
Perth & Kinross	79.69	78.27	72.57	65.16
Scottish Borders	37.06	40.32	33.88	32.72
Shetland Islands	111.39	105.37	63.90	76.53
MIXED COUNCILS				
Angus	55.36	57.42	50.58	37.16
Clackmannanshire	64.47	56.60	42.52	52.81
East Ayrshire	58.08	56.38	51.07	50.03
East Lothian	52.80	50.80	46.30	44.95
East Renfrewshire	78.28	50.35	45.94	42.28
Fife	53.25	45.92	50.75	45.33
Inverclyde	41.90	38.94	36.26	36.23
Midlothian	50.99	43.32	37.23	35.31
Moray	69.18	70.39	48.74	58.41
North Ayrshire	35.47	33.89	36.22	31.03
South Ayrshire	58.32	49.92	42.42	39.88
South Lanarkshire	49.70	38.77	37.68	36.50
Stirling	55.04	48.68	47.00	42.20
West Lothian	46.24	51.64	43.20	41.32
URBAN COUNCILS				
Aberdeen City	52.83	55.53	50.87	41.37
Dundee City	73.36	72.88	68.34	60.31
East Dunbartonshire	56.96	47.92	47.27	44.45
Edinburgh, City of	53.33	52.97	43.91	38.38
Falkirk	52.35	51.53	49.87	46.13
Glasgow City	59.46	57.91	*52.29	52.33
North Lanarkshire	37.92	52.52	41.06	31.36
Renfrewshire	52.26	47.11	44.66	37.19
West Dunbartonshire	46.65	43.82	40.73	31.45
Scotland	58.43	55.22	49.53	44.63

Indicator 3: Food hygiene inspections

The number of establishments in the two highest risk categories requiring inspections during the year, and the percentage of inspections which were undertaken within the prescribed period.

Food hygiene inspections confirm that the processing, cooking, handling and storage of food at business premises meet the requirements of the *Food Safety Act Code of Practice* issued in 2000 and identify potential risks to the health of the public.

Business premises dealing in food are categorised according to the frequency with which they should be inspected, depending on their level of risk to food safety. The higher the level of risk, the more often inspections should be carried out.

This indicator specifies two categories of premises according to the target time between inspections:


- Within six months – premises with the highest risk of food hygiene problems, requiring the most frequent inspection visits.
- Between six and 12 months – premises with an intermediate level of risk. This indicator reports councils' planned food hygiene inspection workload and their success in achieving their inspection targets.

Points to bear in mind

Factors that influence a council's decision on the required number of inspections are:

- the likely risk according to the type of food
- the extent to which food is handled, and the risk of cross-contamination where a process involves both raw and cooked food
- the method of processing – particularly where conditions may favour the growth of food poisoning organisms, eg, canning, vacuum packing and any process where temperature is a controlling factor
- the number of consumers likely to be put at risk if there is a failure in food hygiene and safety procedures
- the cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and structural condition of the premises
- the attitude and technical knowledge of the management on hygiene and safety matters.

Some premises, particularly those in the 'within six months' risk category, may be visited more frequently due to their high level of risk but these additional visits are not reflected in the indicator.

 If you want to know more
access our website at:
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance

Commentary

Almost 8,800 premises were subject to food hygiene inspections in 2003/04. For the two highest risk categories this represents a reduction where direct comparison could be made with previous years.

As a result of the *The Pennington report (1997)* councils' risk assessment of premises has changed. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of premises that fall within the highest risk 'within six month' category. In 2003/04, there were 1,251 properties in this risk category, which is a significant reduction since 1998/99 ([Table 3a](#)).

Over 94% of inspections within the two highest risk categories were carried out within the target time, a similar percentage to the previous two years. Twenty-five of the 31 councils that reported reliable information (excluding Shetland Islands) carried out at least nine in every ten inspections within the target time. Six councils (Dumfries & Galloway, Falkirk, Moray, Orkney Islands, Perth & Kinross and Scottish Borders) carried out fewer than nine in ten inspections within target time ([Table 3b overleaf](#)).

Table 3a

The number of premises requiring food hygiene inspections

	Number of premises in each risk category		
	Within 6 months	Between 6-12 months	Total
2003/04	1,251	7,530	8,781
2002/03	*1,016	*6,663	*7,679
2001/02	1,985	9,056	11,041
2000/01	3,273	9,300	12,573
1999/2000	4,175	8,764	12,939
1998/99	5,706	8,637	14,343

* The reduction in the numbers of premises in these risk categories compared with previous years is primarily a result of Glasgow City not reporting the information in 2002/03.

Table 3b

The proportion of inspections conducted within the target time of 12 months

	Number of premises		Percentage of inspections made within target			
	2003/04	2002/03	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02	2000/01
Aberdeen City	163	189	98.9	99.0	99.6	97.3
Aberdeenshire	516	520	90.8	95.0	93.0	87.2
Angus	201	243	100.0	90.7	81.5	67.8
Argyll & Bute	225	257	98.7	99.3	95.2	85.0
Clackmannanshire	48	72	94.0	92.5	91.3	41.8
Dumfries & Galloway	241	223	86.5	93.1	87.9	81.3
Dundee City	208	226	95.2	92.6	88.4	95.8
East Ayrshire	155	140	97.2	98.2	95.8	97.8
East Dunbartonshire	158	199	96.3	95.8	98.7	96.5
East Lothian	186	310	95.7	92.9	92.8	63.8
East Renfrewshire	154	172	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Edinburgh, City of	659	830	99.1	99.8	98.4	99.0
Eilean Siar	42	52	97.9	93.8	98.9	75.3
Falkirk	134	122	81.9	88.8	89.9	75.8
Fife	166	163	92.3	93.3	89.6	87.3
Glasgow City	1,445		93.1		97.0	94.6
Highland	358	323	95.7	97.8	96.8	98.0
Inverclyde	117	128	94.9	98.5	100.0	96.1
Midlothian	80	99	97.8	96.4	94.8	97.5
Moray	191	258	76.1	66.8	89.2	68.8
North Ayrshire	511	518	98.9	97.7	98.3	92.4
North Lanarkshire	369	556	99.8	99.2	94.8	99.0
Orkney Islands	34	44	65.8	37.8		79.5
Perth & Kinross	244	201	81.3	97.6	92.1	60.8
Renfrewshire	573	572	99.2	99.7	100.0	93.7
Scottish Borders	390	*310	85.1	*87.4	*91.0	74.7
South Ayrshire	174	185	100.0	92.2	90.8	74.0
South Lanarkshire	527	558	99.1	97.9	98.9	98.2
Stirling	201	155	94.7	88.8	85.1	90.4
West Dunbartonshire	150	147	94.7	92.8	89.8	57.4
West Lothian	161	187	94.6	96.9	98.3	96.0
Scotland	8,781	7,679	94.4	95.2	95.5	89.9
UNRELIABLE DATA						
Shetland Islands	*39	30	*33.3	93.5	91.2	15.2

Shetland Island's unreliable information is excluded from the Scotland figures.

Blank cells indicate the council failed to report the information.

Indicator 4: Planning applications

The percentage of planning applications dealt with within two months.

This indicator provides information on how long it takes each council to deal with planning applications by:

- householders seeking approval to build extensions to their homes, or to make other alterations to their properties which need permission
- non-householders, such as developers seeking approval for a wide range of generally larger developments.

In dealing with planning applications, councils:

- consult on and assess the application
- decide whether to approve the application
- notify the applicant of the decision.

Points to bear in mind

Householders have to notify their neighbours that they have submitted an application and councils are usually required to carry out only limited consultations before a decision is reached. Many of these applications are straightforward and result in permission being granted. However, applications by non-householders are generally more complex and the time to deal with them may require to be extended where:

- the council needs to undertake an analysis of the impact on either the environment or the local economy
- an application requires an agreement between the council and the applicant regulating the future use of the land or development
- an application is contrary to the approved local or structure plan.

The time taken to deal with an application will be affected by:

- the extent to which councillors delegate responsibility for approving applications to staff (greater delegation will generally allow applications to be processed more quickly)
- whether there are any objections to the application (eg, from neighbouring property owners)
- the proportion of cases where an applicant needs to submit amended plans before the planning officer feels able to recommend approval.

Some cases, particularly those in conservation areas or affecting listed buildings, may take longer to deal with because of the need for additional advertising and consultation.

In 2000, the Scottish Executive published a National Planning Policy Guideline NPPG 1 (revised) which set the following targets:

- 80% of all planning applications should be determined within two months
- 90% of householder planning applications should be determined within two months.

Commentary

Thirty councils reported reliable information for this indicator. Eilean Siar and Orkney Islands reported unreliable information. Councils determined 51,400 planning applications, an increase of 3,736 (8%) compared with the previous year. Slightly over 24,500 were household applications and almost 27,000 were non-householder applications.

All planning applications

In 2003/04, councils determined 64% of all planning applications¹ within two months, a reduction compared with the previous year (67%). Councils overall have yet to meet the Executive's target of determining 80% of all planning applications within two months. Clackmannanshire was the only council that met the Executive's guideline for all applications.

Five councils, (Aberdeen City, Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire and West Lothian) determined, at least three in every four of all planning applications within two months. A further seven councils (Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, City of Edinburgh, Glasgow City, Highland and Perth & Kinross) determined fewer than six in every ten applications within the required time.

Householder applications

Councils dealt with 80% of householder applications within two months, a reduction compared with the previous year (83%).

Five councils (Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Inverclyde, Moray and West Lothian), one fewer than the previous year, met the National Planning Policy Guideline of determining 90% of householder applications within two months (Table 4). East Ayrshire, City of Edinburgh, Glasgow City and Perth & Kinross dealt with fewer than 75% of applications within two months.

Non-householder applications

Councils dealt with 49% of non-householder applications within two months, a reduction compared with the previous year (53%).

The proportion of non-householder applications determined within two months varied amongst councils, from 39% in East Ayrshire and Glasgow City to 72% in Clackmannanshire. Thirteen councils, three more than the previous year, determined fewer than 50% of applications within the required time, while Clackmannanshire was the only council that dealt with at least two in every three applications within the required time.

1 Information provided by the Scottish Executive Planning Services Audit Unit indicates that in 2003/04 the proportion of listed building and conservation area determinations expressed as a proportion of all determinations (ie, in relation to non-householder as well as householder applications) ranged from 1% to 16%. City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Glasgow City, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire and Stirling were 10% or more.

Table 4
Processing planning applications 2003/04

	Householder applications		Non-householder applications		All applications
	Number of applications	Percentage dealt with within two months	Number of applications	Percentage dealt with within two months	Percentage dealt with within two months
Aberdeen City	1,462	87.3	757	51.1	75.0
Aberdeenshire	1,800	77.6	1,844	40.4	58.8
Angus	681	85.8	711	52.2	68.6
Argyll & Bute	503	87.7	1,026	56.3	66.6
Clackmannanshire	181	95.0	151	72.2	84.6
Dumfries & Galloway	748	75.1	1,302	46.6	57.0
Dundee City	345	81.2	504	47.8	61.4
East Ayrshire	499	72.9	555	39.5	55.3
East Dunbartonshire	910	82.2	195	52.8	77.0
East Lothian	779	88.4	507	49.1	72.9
East Renfrewshire	755	85.4	215	53.0	78.2
Edinburgh, City of	2,314	66.9	2,441	43.2	54.7
Falkirk	529	91.9	480	53.1	73.4
Fife	1,817	85.7	1,747	57.0	71.6
Glasgow City	1,037	55.3	2,248	39.3	44.3
Highland	1,286	84.8	3,125	48.5	59.1
Inverclyde	238	90.8	295	59.0	73.2
Midlothian	643	79.0	310	40.6	66.5
Moray	478	92.5	802	62.8	73.9
North Ayrshire	472	81.6	482	47.9	64.6
North Lanarkshire	1,009	83.1	785	48.5	67.9
Perth & Kinross	931	74.3	1,054	47.1	59.8
Renfrewshire	730	75.2	587	48.9	63.5
Scottish Borders	861	78.7	1,262	51.4	62.5
Shetland Islands	124	88.7	230	59.1	69.5
South Ayrshire	745	81.2	792	53.0	66.7
South Lanarkshire	1,293	87.9	1,082	52.3	71.7
Stirling	477	89.3	487	53.4	71.2
West Dunbartonshire	251	81.3	201	58.2	71.0
West Lothian	678	90.4	647	66.0	78.5
Scotland	24,576	80.6	26,824	49.2	64.2
UNRELIABLE DATA					
Eilean Siar	*97	*86.6	*305	*69.2	*73.4
Orkney Islands	*113	*82.3	*180	*71.1	*75.4

The Scotland figures exclude councils that reported unreliable information.

Indicator 5: Road network condition

The proportion of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment

The proportion of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment. This is defined as roads which are either in need of repair or require further investigation.

The first Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey was carried out on a sample of roads in Scotland during 2003/04. The survey will be repeated annually. The survey uses a standard technique which measures rutting, surface texture, longitudinal profile (bumpiness) and cracking. Over time, the survey results will provide a complete picture of the condition of all Scotland's roads.

Three measures are used in the survey to classify roads:

- Green – roads considered to be in an acceptable condition.
- Amber – roads considered to require further investigation to establish if treatment is required.
- Red – roads considered to have deteriorated to a point at which repairs to prolong future life should be considered.

This indicator shows the condition of roads for the combined amber and red categories.

Points to bear in mind

Audit Scotland published *Maintaining Scotland's roads* on behalf of the Accounts Commission in November 2004.

Information is collected by either machine-based or visual surveys. The surveys are carried out on a sample of each council's road network. In 2003/04 the sample size at a few councils was less than intended because of survey equipment difficulties and bad weather. The figures produced are nevertheless believed to provide a representative picture of road conditions.

The condition of roads will be affected by:

- budgetary constraints
- traffic flow/usage
- weather patterns.

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www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance

Commentary

Across Scotland, around 45% of the road network is either in need of repair or requiring further investigation. The proportion varied widely between councils, from 23% in West Lothian to 62% in the City of Edinburgh (Table 5 overleaf).

Eleven councils reported that 50% or more of their road network should be considered for treatment while a further seven councils (Aberdeenshire, Angus, Eilean Siar, Highland, Midlothian, Orkney Islands and West Lothian) reported that less than 40% of their road network should be considered for treatment.

Table 5

The proportion of the road network that should be considered for maintenance treatment

	Percentage of road network that should be considered for maintenance
Aberdeen City	46.0
Aberdeenshire	33.8
Angus	34.5
Argyll & Bute	49.3
Clackmannanshire	58.6
Dumfries & Galloway	44.9
Dundee City	47.0
East Ayrshire	53.8
East Dunbartonshire	47.2
East Lothian	42.4
East Renfrewshire	55.4
Edinburgh, City of	62.3
Eilean Siar	36.1
Falkirk	44.5
Fife	46.0
Glasgow City	49.6
Highland	38.9
Inverclyde	55.6
Midlothian	39.2
Moray	45.4
North Ayrshire	50.1
North Lanarkshire	52.9
Orkney Islands	32.0
Perth & Kinross	44.7
Renfrewshire	54.1
Scottish Borders	48.0
Shetland Islands	40.7
South Ayrshire	55.4
South Lanarkshire	53.5
Stirling	59.1
West Dunbartonshire	47.2
West Lothian	23.0
Scotland	44.8

Indicator 6: Time taken to repair faulty street lights and faulty traffic lights

The percentage of repairs to street lights completed within seven days and the percentage of traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours.

This indicator covers a range of different problems including such things as lamp failure, control box failure, accident damage, vandalism, shade damage and supply failure.

Points to bear in mind

The indicator captures the time taken for the full range of activity, from notification of the fault to the completion of the repair. The actual repair work is often carried out by a contractor, and in such cases it is, in part, the contractor's performance which is, being measured. However, it is the council's responsibility to ensure that the contractor's performance is satisfactory.

The target times for repairing faulty street lights and traffic lights were established in discussion with the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland.

Commentary

Street lights

Across Scotland, councils carried out slightly over 283,000 street light repairs, an increase of over 14,000 (5%) compared with the previous year (Figure 6 overleaf). The number of repairs has risen significantly. Since 1997/98 when this indicator was first reported, street light repairs have increased by over 50%. Councils are also carrying out more repairs within the target time of seven days. In 2003/04 councils carried out 94% of repairs within seven days, compared with 91% in the previous year.

The proportion of repairs carried out within seven days varied among councils from 63% in Shetland Islands to 100% in South Lanarkshire (Table 6a overleaf). In 2003/04, South Lanarkshire reported a 40% increase (to 25,000) in the number of repairs carried out compared with the previous year, but still completed all repairs within the seven day target time.

Twenty-six councils reported that nine in every ten repairs were undertaken within target time – five more councils than the previous year. Six councils (Angus, Dumfries & Galloway, City of Edinburgh, North Ayrshire, Scottish Borders and Shetland Islands) reported less than 90% of repairs carried out within seven days.

Traffic lights

Across Scotland, councils carried out almost 20,000 repairs to traffic lights, a reduction of 2,307 (12%) compared with the previous year (Table 6b page 24).

Across Scotland, 93% of repairs were carried out within the target of 48 hours, which continues the year-on-year improvement over the past six years. The proportion of repairs carried out within the target time varied from none in Shetland Islands to 100% in Argyll & Bute, Dundee City, Moray and Scottish Borders.

Twenty councils carried out at least nine in every ten repairs within 48 hours, two more than the previous year. Three councils (East Dunbartonshire 70%, Fife 68%, and Inverclyde 76%) carried out fewer than eight in ten repairs within target time.

Figure 6

Percentage of all street lighting repairs undertaken within seven days, and traffic light repairs undertaken within 48 hours

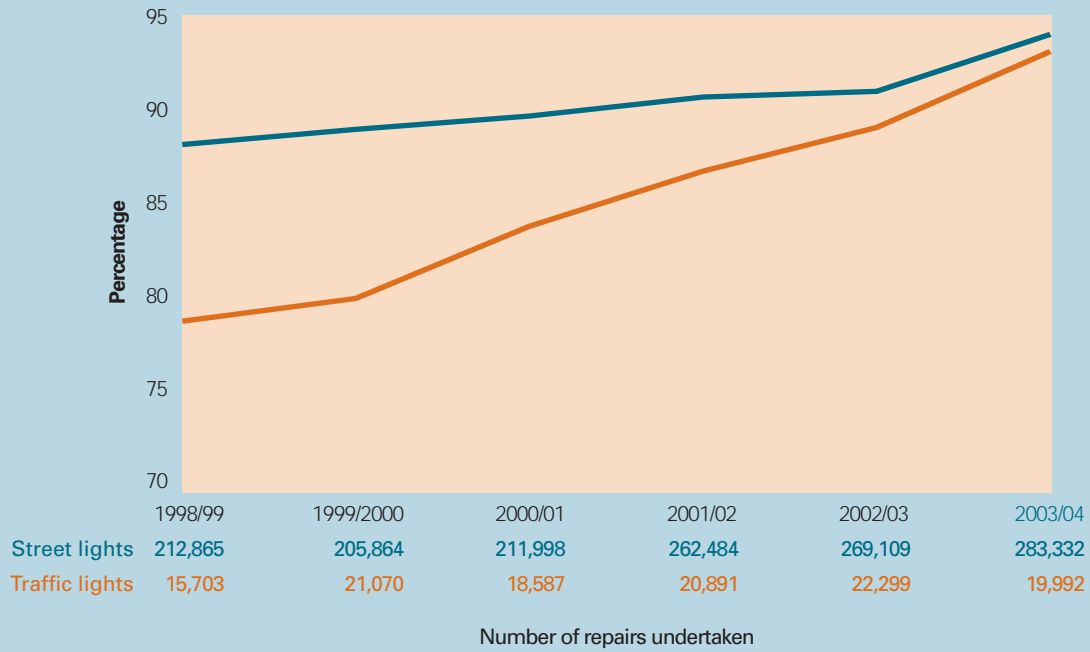


Table 6a

The percentage of all street light repairs completed within seven days

	Total repairs	Percentage of all street light repairs completed within seven days		
	2003/04	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02
Aberdeen City	11,555	93	86	91
Aberdeenshire	8,727	92	70	72
Angus	6,130	79	76	90
Argyll & Bute	3,079	93	91	80
Clackmannanshire	2,041	91	90	90
Dumfries & Galloway	8,063	78	79	81
Dundee City	7,716	98	98	98
East Ayrshire	8,248	97	98	94
East Dunbartonshire	5,682	98	93	95
East Lothian	2,971	98	92	77
East Renfrewshire	2,239	99	99	96
Edinburgh, City of	27,102	87	85	85
Eilean Siar	109	96	79	93
Falkirk	7,253	95	97	97
Fife	28,248	95	85	91
Glasgow City	31,849	99	97	95
Highland	7,201	97	97	98
Inverclyde	3,338	93	90	80
Midlothian	2,277	90	78	87
Moray	5,106	97	97	97
North Ayrshire	6,672	70	96	90
North Lanarkshire	23,772	98	93	81
Orkney Islands	488	93	87	82
Perth & Kinross	6,739	98	99	99
Renfrewshire	9,785	99	97	90
Scottish Borders	7,974	84	86	93
Shetland Islands	166	63	77	80
South Ayrshire	6,540	96	97	93
South Lanarkshire	25,023	100	99	99
Stirling	1,036	93	90	89
West Dunbartonshire	3,765	98	94	94
West Lothian	12,438	95	94	95
Scotland	283,332	94	91	91

Table 6b

The percentage of all traffic lights repaired within 48 hours

	Total repairs	Percentage of traffic lights repaired within 48 hours		
	2003/04	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02
Aberdeen City	962	94	95	94
Aberdeenshire	51	88	91	99
Angus	179	94	94	96
Argyll & Bute	50	100	96	90
Clackmannanshire	9	89	90	94
Dumfries & Galloway	201	84	83	86
Dundee City	319	100	99	99
East Ayrshire	357	80	86	90
East Dunbartonshire	707	70	83	85
East Lothian	106	94	98	99
East Renfrewshire	208	91	80	87
Edinburgh, City of	1,878	99	97	97
Eilean Siar	13	85	94	100
Falkirk	80	90	94	92
Fife	587	68	83	93
Glasgow City	8,793	96	88	85
Highland	90	98	100	100
Inverclyde	87	76	72	92
Midlothian	85	92	94	98
Moray	2	100	100	100
North Ayrshire	136	89	84	87
North Lanarkshire	2,811	96	81	63
Perth & Kinross	312	97	85	91
Renfrewshire	620	92	92	91
Scottish Borders	21	100	100	95
Shetland Islands	20	0	*36	87
South Ayrshire	326	80	95	94
South Lanarkshire	498	93	83	88
Stirling	42	91	97	94
West Dunbartonshire	215	91	89	81
West Lothian	227	93	93	93
Scotland	19,992	93	89	87

Orkney Islands do not provide this service.

Indicator 7: Noise complaints

The number and proportion of noise complaints settled within 14 days of receipt

This indicator shows the number of complaints about noise where, following initial investigation, it is confirmed that a problem exists and action requires to be taken. It also shows the proportion of these complaints where a response was provided to the complainer within 14 days in order to explain the nature of any action taken, and conclusions reached.

The target time for noise complaints was established following consultation with the appropriate professional bodies.

Points to bear in mind

Factors that may influence this indicator include:

- the level of the service the council provides (eg, 24 hours a day for seven days a week, office hours for only five days a week)
- the volume and complexity of complaints received.

Complaints that the council passes on to other agencies such as the police are not recorded.

This is the first year we have reported this information.

Commentary

In 2003/04 Scottish councils received slightly over 10,300 noise complaints. They dealt with 2,300 at first point of contact to the satisfaction of the complainer, and 8,000 required further investigation. The number ranged from eight in the Shetland Islands to 1,582 in the City of Edinburgh (Table 7 overleaf).

Across Scotland there were 16 complaints per 10,000 population requiring further investigation. This ranged widely from less than two complaints per 10,000 population in Moray to 35 in the City of Edinburgh.

Most complaints requiring further investigation were in urban areas. Seven councils (Aberdeen City, Dundee City, City of Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow City, Renfrewshire and South Ayrshire) reported 20 complaints or more per 10,000 population.

Rural councils reported the lowest number of complaints per 10,000 population. Argyll & Bute, Eilean Siar, Moray, Scottish Borders and Shetland Islands reported fewer than five complaints per 10,000 population

Overall, 65% of complaints were settled within 14 days. The percentage settled within 14 days varied widely from 13% in Scottish Borders to 99% in Aberdeenshire. Seven councils (Aberdeenshire, City of Edinburgh, Eilean Siar, Midlothian, Moray, Renfrewshire and West Lothian) completed at least eight in every ten complaints within the target time. Four councils (Clackmannanshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross and Scottish Borders) completed fewer than three in ten complaints within the target time.

Table 7

The number of noise complaints requiring investigation and the percentage completed within 14 days

	Number of noise complaints requiring investigation	Number of noise complaints requiring investigation per 10,000 population	Percentage completed within 14 days
	2003/04	2003/04	2003/04
Aberdeen City	570	27.2	47.7
Aberdeenshire	305	13.4	99.0
Angus	91	8.4	36.3
Argyll & Bute	38	4.2	50.0
Clackmannanshire	34	7.1	29.4
Dumfries & Galloway	80	5.4	58.8
Dundee City	368	25.5	72.0
East Ayrshire	81	6.8	32.1
East Dunbartonshire	110	10.3	68.2
East Lothian	119	13.1	45.4
East Renfrewshire	54	6.0	77.8
Edinburgh, City of	1,582	35.3	88.4
Eilean Siar	10	3.8	80.0
Falkirk	296	20.3	48.6
Fife	515	14.7	52.4
Glasgow City	1,208	20.9	71.1
Highland	116	5.6	67.2
Inverclyde	116	13.9	54.3
Midlothian	75	9.3	88.0
Moray	14	1.6	92.9
North Ayrshire	237	17.5	50.6
North Lanarkshire	467	14.5	22.5
Orkney Islands	22	11.5	72.7
Perth & Kinross	226	16.7	28.8
Renfrewshire	422	24.5	81.3
Scottish Borders	31	2.9	12.9
Shetland Islands	8	3.6	62.5
South Ayrshire	230	20.6	70.9
South Lanarkshire	298	9.9	58.1
Stirling	76	8.8	56.6
West Dunbartonshire	109	11.7	37.6
West Lothian	93	5.8	80.6
Scotland	8,001	15.8	65.0

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Contacts

If you have any specific queries about the performance information, you may wish to contact your council. A contact person for each council is given below. If you have general queries about this pamphlet, please contact Jim Lakie, e-mail jlakie@audit-scotland.gov.uk or Alec Taylor, e-mail ataylor@audit-scotland.gov.uk at Audit Scotland, T. 0131 477 1234.

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