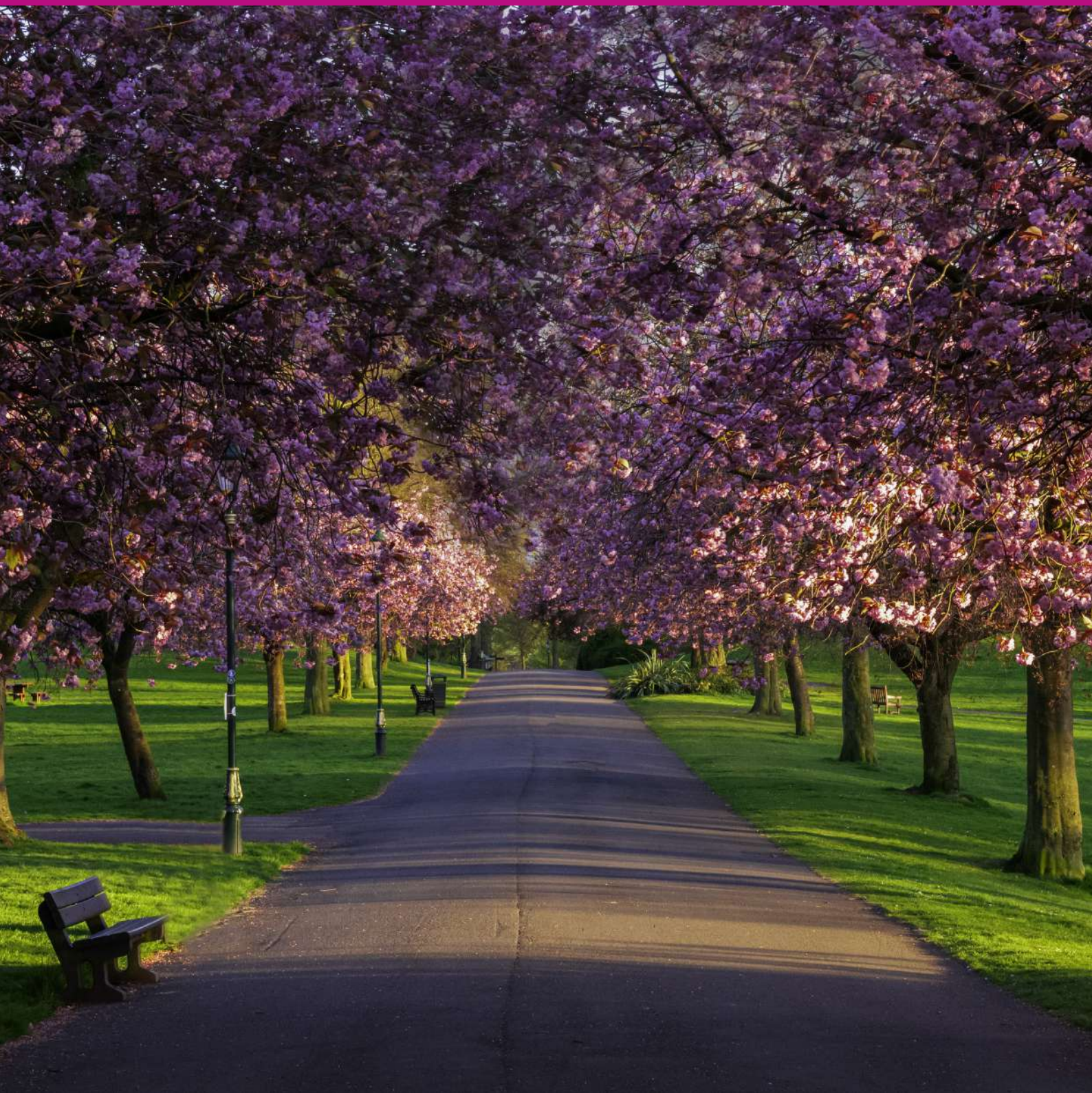


Spending on parks and neighbourhood services in Scotland





APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not-for-profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority front line services, hosting a network for front line service providers in areas such as waste and refuse collection, parks and environmental services, leisure, school meals, cleaning, housing and building maintenance.

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement.



New Policy Institute (NPI) is a UK research institute which produces evidence-based research on a range of social and economic issues.

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This report was written and researched on behalf of APSE Scotland.

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This report was written and researched based on data up to August 2019 . Whilst the impact of COVID-19 has had a further impact on parks and neighbourhood services within Scotland this report provides an analysis of the baseline upon which these services responded to the health pandemic and will help to inform public policy going forward

Foreword



During the early spring of 2020, a health pandemic hit across Europe, following in the wake of its impact in China, and spreading globally to wreak havoc on health systems and economies across the world. The pandemic has tested the resilience of governments at a national level, but a common theme to emerge has been the critical role of local government; services delivered at a municipal level have protected the most vulnerable, and recalibrated public values, there has been a renewal in the value of place. Clean and green local environments have been recognised as an essential component of public well-being.

This report is therefore timely. During 2019 and early 2020 APSE Scotland and NPI set out to explore the funding issues for parks, under the umbrella of the broader 'neighbourhood services' which councils deliver, and, alongside the earlier data analysis on spend, valuable insights were provided by local authorities, with parks and neighbourhood services specialists helping to contextualise the data.

Over the past decade, local government funding has been placed under pressure, and whatever one's views may be as to the necessity or otherwise of funding cuts to councils, this report set out to explore how those cuts have fallen on parks and neighbourhood services in Scotland. It does not attempt to justify, defend or support the public policy dynamics of austerity but instead, it sets out to provide an analysis of the current finances of these services, and how the financial circumstances impact on what is delivered.

This report finds that spending on parks has been hit harder than spending in general. From a peak in 2009/10 parks have seen deep cuts to budgets with spending down by a third, whilst overall neighbourhood services have been reduced by around a fifth, compared to overall local government in Scotland, with spending reduced by a tenth. This raises questions about the sustainability of parks should this trend in budgets continue. And these questions come at the very point when our beautiful parks in Scotland have been used as the lungs of our local communities, providing safe and green open spaces for walking and exercise, ensuring both the physical and mental well-being of our communities during the health pandemic. The public has been enormously grateful for these local green assets, particularly when many do not enjoy the luxury of a garden of their own.

Parks and neighbourhood services are universal services, they are also highly visible to the public. The contribution of these services to wellbeing and health is however often hidden. It has been estimated that parks contribute £2.8bn per year to Scotland's community health and wellbeing. In turn, this saves NHS Scotland some £9m per year, including fewer GP visits, and ways in which parks help both physical and mental health.

So, as we emerge from this health pandemic, our ambitions from this report are that we change the narrative on what we value. We are the first to acknowledge that councillors and officers have faced some very tough budget decisions, many out with their direct control, however, in highlighting that cuts have fallen disproportionately on parks and neighbourhood services, we are recommending that future decision making needs to be made through the prism of value rather than just cost. Parks and neighbourhood services have demonstrated their resilience during these challenging times. We cannot risk these services being hollowed out and unable to respond in the future.

I commend this report to you.

Cllr Les Sharp, APSE Scotland Chair

Summary

This is a report about what has happened to spending on parks and open spaces (“parks”) by Scottish local authorities. To provide context, the report also looks at spending on the wider group of local authority neighbourhood services. Spending is measured both gross and net of income. Gross spending adjusted for inflation (“real” gross spending) is a measure of the volume of service provided. Income includes grants and reimbursements as well as customer and client receipts.

The main findings are:

- 1. Spending on parks has been hit harder than spending in general.** From a peak in 2008/09, parks have seen deeper cuts in spending (down by a third) than neighbourhood services (down a fifth) and all local government services (down a tenth). Half the fall in spending on parks had happened by 2010/11.
- 2. Parks have been hit about as hard in Scotland as England.** Between 2009/10 and 2017/18, the percentage fall in net spending on parks was the same in Scotland as in England. The fall for neighbourhood services was less in Scotland.
- 3. Revenue has been less buoyant in Scotland than England.** Customer and client receipts produce less income for neighbourhood services in Scotland than in England. Rising in England, this income has been falling in Scotland.
- 4. The all-Scotland parks average is only a rough guide to what has happened in individual local authority areas.** Over the five years to 2017/18, 10 authorities saw no falls in gross spending on parks while 5 saw falls more than double the average.
- 5. Neighbourhood services have a low priority attached to them compared with other services.** APSE has identified 2012/13 as the minimum sustainable level for local government UK-wide. Budget data suggests that after inflation, total council service spending in Scotland in 2019/20 is above the 2012/13 level whereas spending on neighbourhood services is below.

Neighbourhood services are universal services which contribute to wellbeing and are seen by the public as a core responsibility of local government. Parks are one of their most visible elements. It has been estimated that parks contribute £2.8bn per year to Scotland’s community health and wellbeing. Through their contribution to better health, they save NHS Scotland some £9m per year in fewer GP visits alone. The hollowing out of neighbourhood services which has been taking place undermines the essence of local government.

Main report

Introduction

This report is about what has happened to spending on parks and open spaces by Scottish local authorities. Spending on parks and open spaces (“parks” for short) is the sum of two lines in the Scottish government’s local authority statistics, namely “community parks and open spaces” and “countryside recreation and management”. In spending terms, the first is about six times bigger than the second.

To put parks in context, the report also looks at spending on the wider group of local authority services known as neighbourhood services. These are the services that local authorities provide that are neither education, social care nor housing. Total council service spending covers all these services, as well as corporate services. It does not include spending on fire and police services.

Spending is revenue spending not capital spending. It is measured both gross and net of income. Gross spending adjusted for inflation (“real” gross spending) is a measure of the volume of service provided. Income is made up of customer and client receipts (sales, fees, user charges and rental income) and grants, reimbursements and contributions.

The main report is supported by an appendix containing graphs of the main statistics along with supporting explanatory text. Each section of the main report refers to the relevant part of the appendix.

The wider benefits of parks and open spaces

The benefits that parks and open spaces provide both to individuals and to society at large go well beyond the income and other client receipts that appear on the credit column of a parks budget. Several recent reports have examined these wider benefits of parks and attempted to put a value on them.¹ More than half the UK population visit their local park at least once a month, especially young people, families with children and city dwellers. Parks provide natural surroundings and a space in which to be physically active. They have a positive impact on a child’s physical and cognitive development. They improve the environment by supporting biodiversity, absorbing flood water, improving air quality and mitigating urban heat.

Of special note is a submission by Fields in Trust to a session of the Scottish Parliament’s Local Government and Communities Committee.² Citing research that had been undertaken for it, FIT reported that parks as green spaces:

- Contribute £2.8 Billion per year to Scotland’s community health and wellbeing
- Represent an average Total Economic Value to an individual in Scotland of £27.96 per year
- Contribute to better general health which translates into a £9.1million saving to NHS Scotland per year because of fewer GP visits.

As the original research makes clear, this last estimate, which just reflects the costs of the GP visits, is conservative in that it leaves out of account additional costs to the NHS associated with the treatment arising from those GP visits.

1 These include: Heritage Lottery Fund (2016) State of Public Parks, Research Report; Vivid Economics (2016) The contribution made by Sheffield’s Parks to the wellbeing of the city’s citizens; Vivid Economics (2017) Natural capital accounts for public green space in London; House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee (2017) Public Parks: Seventh Report of Session 2016-17; Fields in Trust (2018), Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces

2 23 May, 2018. The submission by Fields in Trust begins on p25 of the [papers](#) for the meeting.

Spending on parks, neighbourhood services and all local authority services³

In 2017/18, gross spending on parks totalled £168m, made up of £30m income and £138m net spending. Gross spending on neighbourhood services totalled £2,555m, of which income contributed £662m. This means that parks accounted for 6.6 per cent of gross spending and 7.3 per cent of net spending on neighbourhood services.

After adjusting for inflation, gross spending on parks peaked in 2008/09 at £242m (measured in 2017/18 prices). Of this, income contributed £33m, leaving net spending of £209m. By 2017/18, real spending had fallen 31 per cent (gross) and 33 per cent (net). More than half of these falls had happened by 2010/11. Net spending fell sharply again in 2013/14 and every year from 2015/16 onwards.

Spending on neighbourhood services and total council service spending peaked in 2009/10. By 2017/18, real spending on neighbourhood services had fallen by 19 per cent (gross) and 22 per cent (net). Half of these falls happened in 2010/11. Spending fell sharply again in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Real spending on all services apart from fire and police fell between 2009/10 and 2017/18 by 7 per cent (gross) and 12 per cent (net).

Spending on parks and neighbourhood services in Scotland and England⁴

Comparisons with England are restricted to net spending because of differences in what constitutes income in the two countries. Real net spending on parks and on neighbourhood services have followed different paths in Scotland and England over the last 10 years. As noted above, spending on parks fell sharply in Scotland in 2010/11 (down 14 per cent). English spending fell faster to 2014/15. Since then, Scottish spending has been falling faster. By 2017/18, the cumulative fall since 2009/10 was only two percentage points less in Scotland than England.

Real net spending on neighbourhood services fell sharply in Scotland and England in 2010/11, down 9 per cent in each. But while spending in England continued coming down for two more years, spending in Scotland changed little before sharper falls in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Even so, the cumulative fall since 2009/10 was 17 percentage points less in Scotland than England by 2017/18.

Measured relative to the population, net spending per head on parks in Scotland was higher in Scotland than England in 2017/18. On this measure, 31 of the 32 Scottish local authorities were above the English average. Net spending per head on neighbourhood services was also higher in Scotland. Differences in spending per head between Scotland and England are a long-term feature and reflect a variety of factors: there is no reason to think that uniform spending per head should be the norm. However, the extent of the difference here does suggest that, despite the steep falls in spending, parks in Scotland are in a better position than in England

3 Appendix figures A to D

4 Appendix figures E and F

Customer and client income in Scotland and England⁵

Net spending has come down further than gross spending. All that is required for this to happen is that income comes down more slowly than gross spending. The significance of this, if any, depends on which part of income – grants or customer and client receipts – is responsible for the effect.

The split between the two parts of income is not available for parks but it is for neighbourhood services, in both Scotland and England. In 2017/18, customer and client receipts accounted for 20 per cent of gross spending in Scotland, compared with 26 per cent (from sales, fees and charges) in England. Both these percentages are up on 2011/12, by two percentage points in Scotland and five in England.

The way these numbers are presented, relative to falling real gross spending, masks a sharp difference between the two countries. Over the six-year period, whereas England saw a 7 per cent real increase in sales, fees and charges, Scotland saw a 5 per cent real fall in customer and client receipts. Although the increase in England came almost equally from planning, environmental services and highways and transportation, planning (the smallest of the three measured by total spending) recorded the fastest rate of growth of income.

Differences between local authorities⁶

There is a lot of variation in what has happened to spending between local authorities, but the variation has been greater for parks than for neighbourhood services. For example, measured by gross spending, data back to 2011/12 shows 14 authorities with falls close to the average for neighbourhood services and only four a long way from it. By contrast, only 9 authorities saw falls (from 2012/13) close to the average for parks while 10 saw no cuts and 5 saw cuts more than twice the average. This means that the average is a better reflection of what has happened to spending across most parts of Scotland for neighbourhood services than it is for parks.

Several things lie behind the variation between authorities. One is both differing and changing accounting practices over time, for example, about what belongs in the parks budget and what belongs in central services. Another is the extent to which capital spending is used to support parks. The precise timing of when to take cuts – early in a multi-year plan or later – makes a difference, especially when comparisons are made between individual years. Councillors make different choices in different authorities: cuts have been offered but not always chosen. Beneath it all, there are big differences in the levels of spending per head on parks, but these differences do not admit of an obvious explanation. For example, there are big city authorities and large rural authorities among both the highest spenders and the lowest spenders.

Conclusion: a minimum baseline and the argument for neighbourhood services

A problem with comparisons to 2010 is that local government spending around that time across the UK was close to a record high by historical standards. UK local government spending is now far from that position, falling below a 50-year low in 2016/17 and continuing on downwards. A better reference point is one which can serve as a near-term target for local government spending. A recent report for APSE argues that the level of real spending in 2012/13 can be seen as a minimum sustainable level of local government spending for 2020/21.⁷

Excluding police and fire, total gross spending on local authority services in Scotland after inflation was one per cent below this baseline in 2017/18. By contrast, real gross spending was 11 per cent below for neighbourhood services and 13 per cent below for parks. This baseline cannot be used mechanically: local authorities obviously would not deploy their resources in exactly the same way now as then. But it is of note that the overall shortfall of one per cent would be sufficient, if allocated entirely to neighbourhood services, to halve the shortfall in their spending to 6 per cent.

On the basis of published budget data for 2019/20 for net spending, total council service spending in the current year will be 5 per cent higher than in 2017/18 – and therefore above the minimum baseline. Yet on the same budget data, net spending on neighbourhood services is expected to be 5 per cent below the 2017/18 level.

With spending on neighbourhood services below the minimum sustainable level but total council service spending above it, the fundamental problem appears to be the low priority that is attached to neighbourhood services in Scotland. It is worth recalling the basic arguments for defending neighbourhood services in general and parks in particular.

- Neighbourhood services are universal services. They contribute to wellbeing. They are seen by the public as a core responsibility of local government. Parks are one of their most visible elements.
- The hollowing out of neighbourhood services undermines the essence of local government. Defending neighbourhood services is fundamental to the defence of local government as a whole.
- Their potential to generate income and attract visitors to an area means that parks are financial assets – but their benefits go beyond this, to include both the individual and community health and wellbeing which they promote and the civic pride which they foster.

7 'Neighbourhood services and sustainable local government', NPI for APSE, July 2019

Appendix

This appendix contains the nine graphs (A to J) referred in the main report. Each graph is accompanied by a description of what is being measured and the key points of note in the graph. The report uses Scottish local government finance statistics combining: final outturn data for the years up to 2017/18;⁸ provisional outturn data for 2018/19 and budget estimates data for 2019/20.⁹ All these data are sourced from the Scottish government website.

The GDP deflator (a national statistic) is used to convert spending measured in current prices into spending measured in fixed (2017/18) prices. This measure of what is known as “real” spending is a proxy for the **volume** of service provided. Price indices for 2017/18 and 2019/20 were obtained from the Office for Budget Responsibility’s GDP deflator forecasts as of March 2019.¹⁰

Parks and open spaces

Parks and open spaces (parks for short) are defined for the purpose of this report as the sum of two lines of spending for councils: community parks and open spaces and countryside recreation and management. This was the result of discussions with local parks managers and finance representatives conducted for this report. Though the remit of local authority parks managers in Scotland goes beyond these two lines, (for example, to include the upkeep of sports fields and golf courses), these services are not considered in this report as they contain services outside a description of ‘parks’ in the literal sense. In addition, following on from NPI’s work for the Parks Action Group in England,¹¹ these two lines of Scottish council spending equate to the ‘parks and open spaces’ line used by that report to portray parks in English councils. This allows for comparisons between parks spending in Scotland and England.

Neighbourhood services

Parks are part of a wider group of environmental services. These, together with roads and transport, cultural, planning and economic development services, make up neighbourhood services. These are the services provided by councils that are not social care, education or housing. Examples of specific neighbourhood services include waste collection and disposal, public transport, libraries and planning.

Net and gross expenditure

This report looks at two different indicators of spending on services: net and gross expenditure. Gross expenditure is the total spent on services regardless of funding. Net expenditure is gross expenditure less income generated from the service. This includes customer and client receipts and service specific central government grants

Income

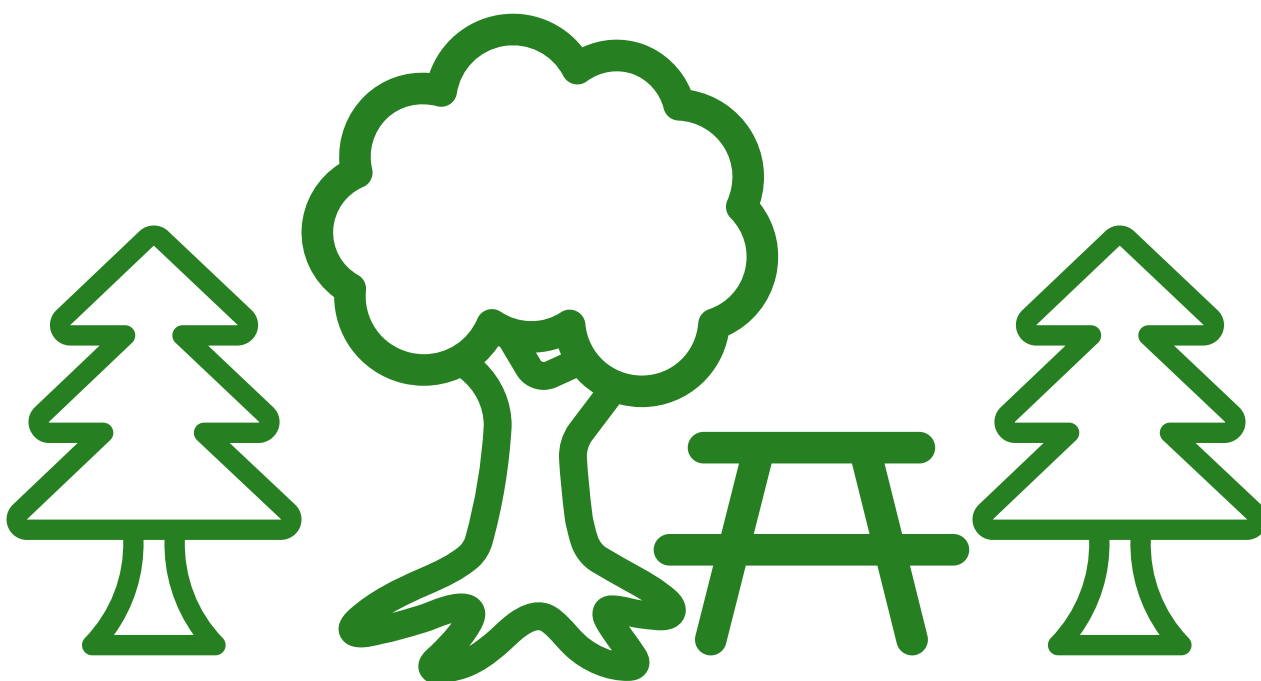
Income from services can be split into two groups:

- Commercial income is defined as the revenue generated by charging fees for services they provide. In Scotland this income is called ‘Customer and Clients receipts’ and in England it is called ‘Sales, Fees and Charges’.
- Non-commercial income is mostly made up of service specific grants outside of the General Revenue Grant (Scotland) and Revenue Support Grant (England). This is referred to as ‘grants, reimbursements and contributions’ in Scotland but is included as part of ‘other income’ in England.

Recharging

Recharging is where one council department charges another for helping them provide their services. CIPFA provide the following example: “the Education service charging the Social Work service for the use of accommodation and facilities in the provision of Social Work services.” Costs outside of a manager’s ‘controllable budget’ may also be recharged to Central Services within the authority.¹²

The treatment of recharging in Scotland changed in 2011/12, after which it was not treated as income but was instead deducted directly from gross expenditure.¹³ Scottish statistics provide two numbers for gross expenditure, one which does not take into account recharges and another that does. It is the later that is used for the purposes of this report. This adjusted gross expenditure was also produced before the accounting changes and therefore can be used for prior to 2011/12. As a result, Scottish and English authorities treat recharges differently.¹⁴ Comparisons can therefore only be drawn for net expenditure and commercial income for services



12 Internal Transactions and Operating Segments Reporting 2017/18, CIPFA, <https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/technical-panels-and-boards/local-authority-scotland-accounts-advisory-committee/guidance-and-publications/internal-transactions-and-operating-segments-reporting-201718>

13 Local Financial Returns 2017-18 – Guidance, Scottish Gov, <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Local-Government-Finance/ReturnLFR/LFR201819guidance>

14 General guidance notes for completing the Revenue Outturn suite of forms, MHCLG, pg.9, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801462/General_fund_revenue_account_outturn_2018_to_2019_general_guidance_notes.pdf

Figure A: real net expenditure and income for parks (2017/18 prices*)

This graph shows total gross spending on parks and open spaces at 2017/18 prices (the *volume* of spending) broken down between net spending and income.

- The volume of gross spending on parks peaked at £242m in 2008/09. Spending in 2017/18 was 31 per cent lower at £168m (down £74m).
- Falls in gross spending have been much sharper in some years than others. The biggest fall was in 2010/11 (down 14 per cent on the year before). Other years with large falls were 2009/10, 2013/14, 2015/16 and 2016/17, all in excess of 3.5 per cent in gross spending.
- In 2016/17 and 2017/18, income grew sharply (up 26 and 17 per cent). As a result, gross spending fell less sharply than net spending in those two years.
- The volume of net spending also peaked in 2008/09 at £208m and has since fallen by 34 per cent to £138m in 2017/18.

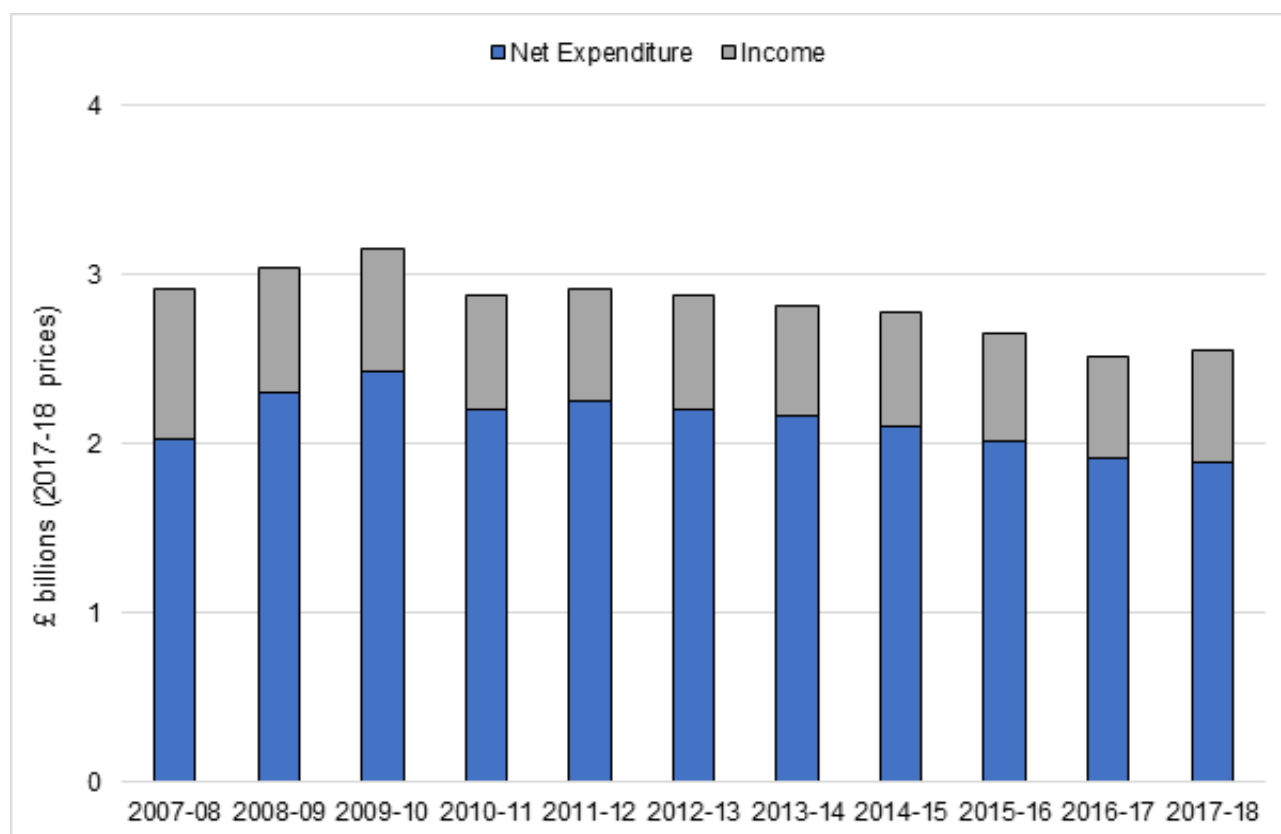


* The income calculated here is the difference between the recharges adjusted gross expenditure and net expenditure, as such recharges are not included in any of the income figures shown.

Figure B: real net expenditure and income on neighbourhood services (2017/18 prices)*

This graph shows total gross spending on neighbourhood services (NS) at 2017/18 prices (the *volume* of spending) broken down between net spending and income.

- Gross spending on NS peaked in 2009/10 at £3.15bn and has fallen by 19 per cent (£0.6bn) to £2.56bn by 2017/18.
- Falls in gross spending have been much sharper in some years than others. The biggest fall was in 2010/11 (down 9 per cent on the year before). Other years with large falls were 2015/16 and 2016/17 with cuts of 4 and 5 per cent respectively.
- Income from NS fell steeply in 2015/16 and 2016/17, by 5 and 7 per cent. The fall over the previous five years to 2009/10 was 7 per cent in total.
- Income accounts for a larger portion of gross spending in NS than in parks (18 per cent for parks and 26 per cent for NS).
- Net spending on NS has fallen by £0.54bn, from £2.43bn in 2009/10 to £1.89bn in 2017/18 (down 22 per cent).

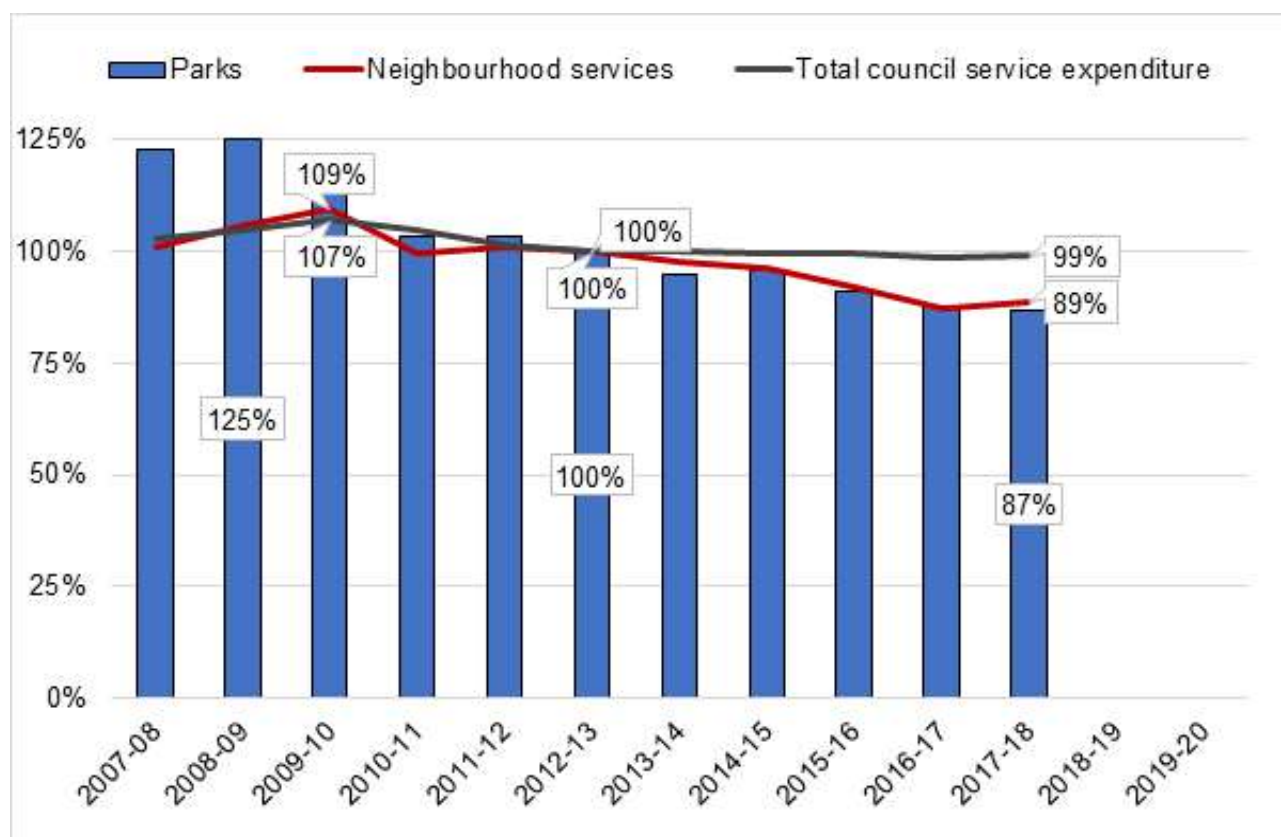


* The income calculated here is the difference between the recharges adjusted gross expenditure and net expenditure, as such recharges are not included in any of the income figures shown.

Figure C: indices of real gross expenditure for parks, neighbourhood services and all services (2012/13=100%)

This graph shows the levels of gross spending on parks, neighbourhood services and local government as a whole (or Total Service Expenditure, TSE).^{*} Each is expressed as an index relative to the level in 2012/13. The choice of 2012/13 reflects the conclusion of a report for APSE that that is a reasonable target level for UK local government spending as a whole in 2020/21.[†]

- Since 2012/13, gross spending on NS and parks has fallen 11 and 13 per cent in real terms respectively, whereas overall spending by local government has barely changed.
- Local government as a whole in Scotland has only faced spending cuts of any significance up until 2011/12. However, increasing pressures elsewhere for councils has led to cuts continuing for NS despite little change to overall spending.



* TSE is the sum of neighbourhood services, social care, education and housing (non-HRA). Fire and Police services were excluded for the years up until 2012/13 since they were separated from local government.

† 'Neighbourhood services and sustainable local government', NPI for APSE, July 2019

Figure D: indices of real net expenditure for parks, neighbourhood services and all services (2012/13=100%)

This graph shows net spending for the same three areas of local government as in figure C. Provisional outturn figures for 2018/19 and local government budget figures for 2019/20 are also shown (these numbers are only published for net spending).

- This shows the current trends look set to continue with further falls (of 4 and 5 per cent) for parks and neighbourhood services, even while overall net spending remains nearly unchanged in real terms.
- Compared to gross expenditure (figure C), spending on TSE and NS are both down 3 per cent in 2017/18 since 2012/13, parks though is down 8 per cent more. The sharp increase in income from parks shown in figure A is why the gross and net spending figures are so different.

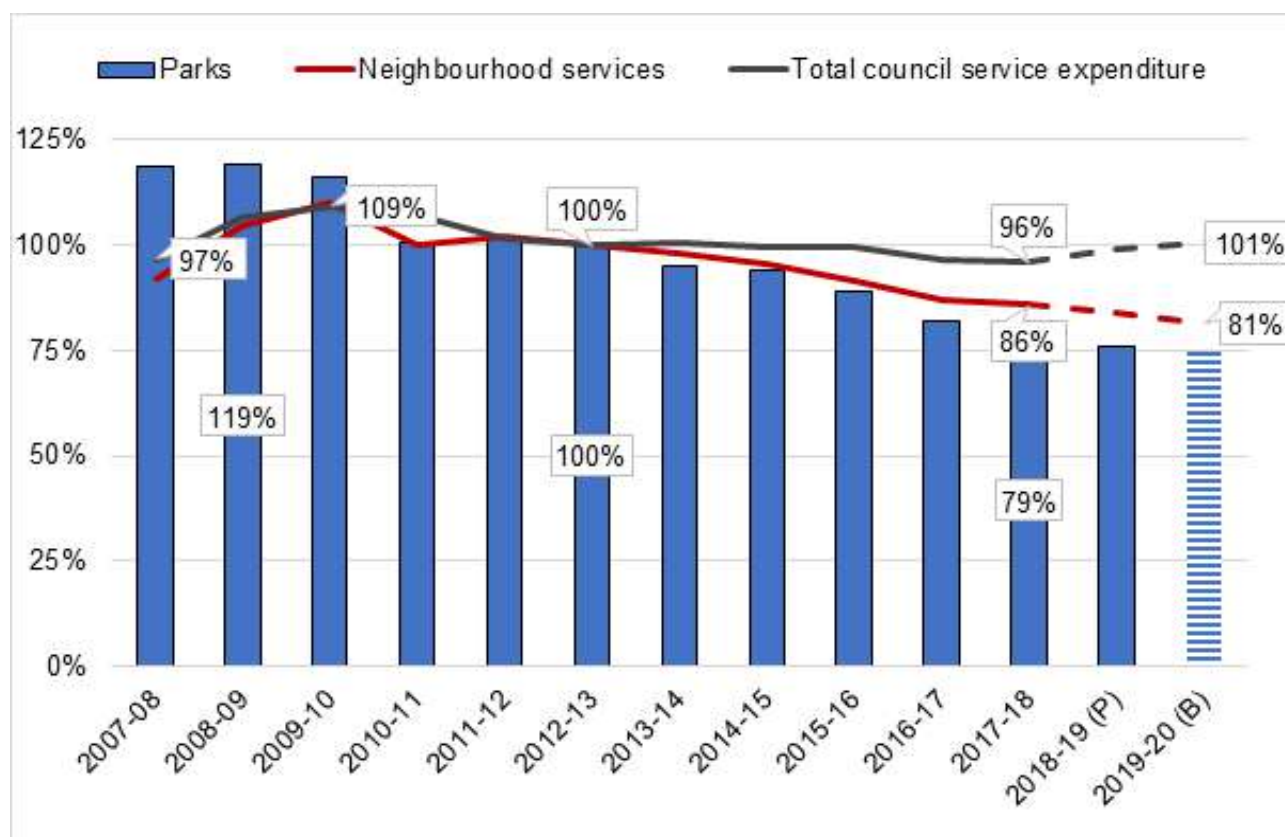


Figure E: Real net expenditure on parks: Scotland, England (% of each country's net expenditure in 2009/10)

Figure E shows net expenditure on parks by Scottish and English local authorities as a percentage of spending in 2009/10 (in 2017/18 prices).

- In real terms, the cuts to net spending on parks has been similar in scale in the two countries, down 32 per cent in Scotland and 34 per cent in England. Although the falls differed between the two countries in 2010/11 and 2011/12, the similarities since then are far more striking than the differences
- In Scotland, spending fell by 14 per cent in 2010/11 and stayed relatively steady until 2012/13. Then it fell another 5 per cent in 2013/14 and stayed steady for another year. Then, since 2014/15, spending has fallen a further 13 per cent relative to its 2009/10 level.
- In England, net spending on parks had fallen 16 per cent by 2011/12. The cuts then became more consistent than in Scotland, falling down a further 18 per cent relative to 2009/10.

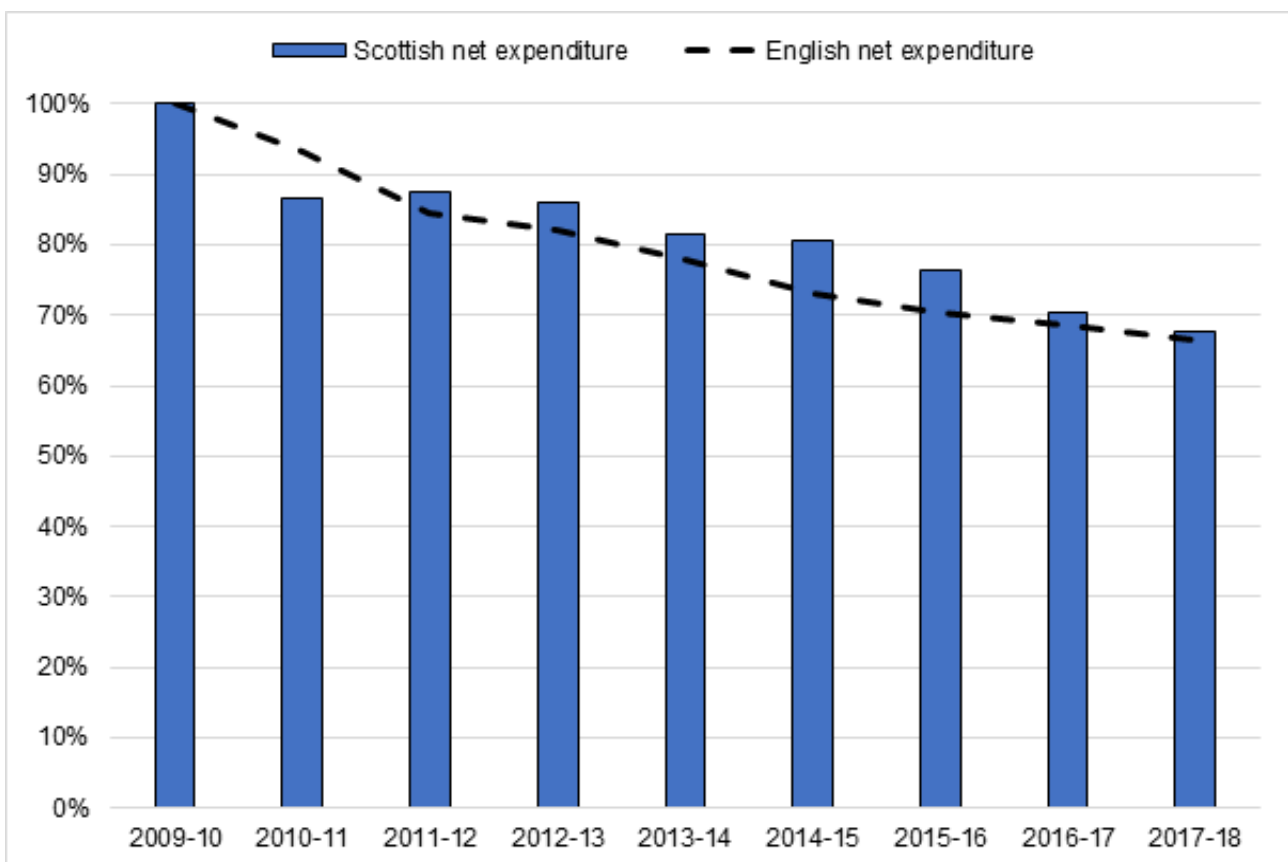


Figure F: Real net expenditure on neighbourhood services: Scotland, England (% of own each country's net expenditure in 2009/10)

Figure F shows net expenditure on neighbourhood services by Scottish and English local authorities as a percentage of 2009/10 (in 2017/18 prices).

- In real terms, the cuts to net spending on neighbourhood services have been less deep in Scotland (down 22 per cent since 2009/10) than in England (down 39 per cent).
- In Scotland, spending fell by 9 per cent in 2010/11 and stayed relatively steady until 2012/13. Then it fell a further 13 per cent up until 2017/18.
- In England, net spending on parks had fallen 17 per cent in the first three years to 2011/12. Then they were cut a further 13 per cent in the next three years to 2014/15. In the final three years spending was cut a further 9 per cent relative to its 2009/10 level.

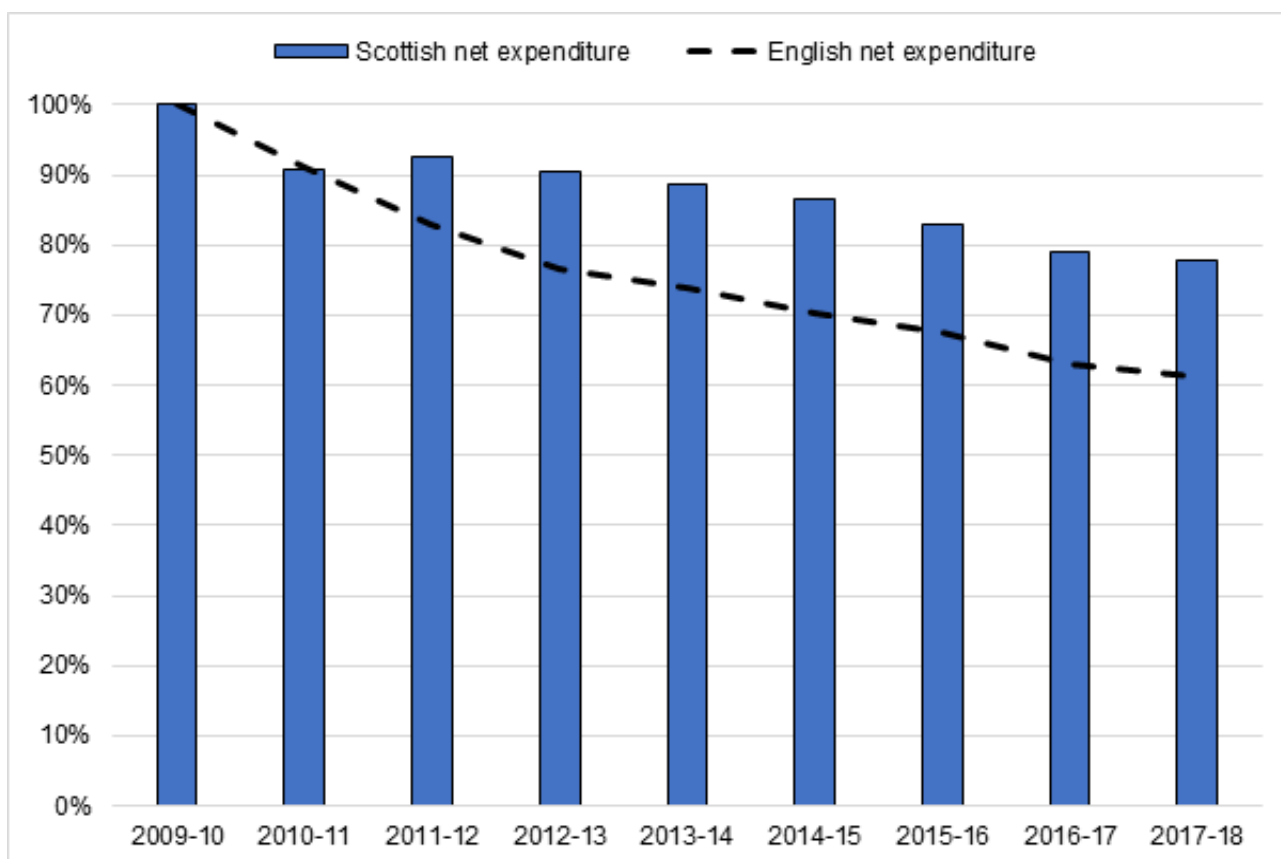
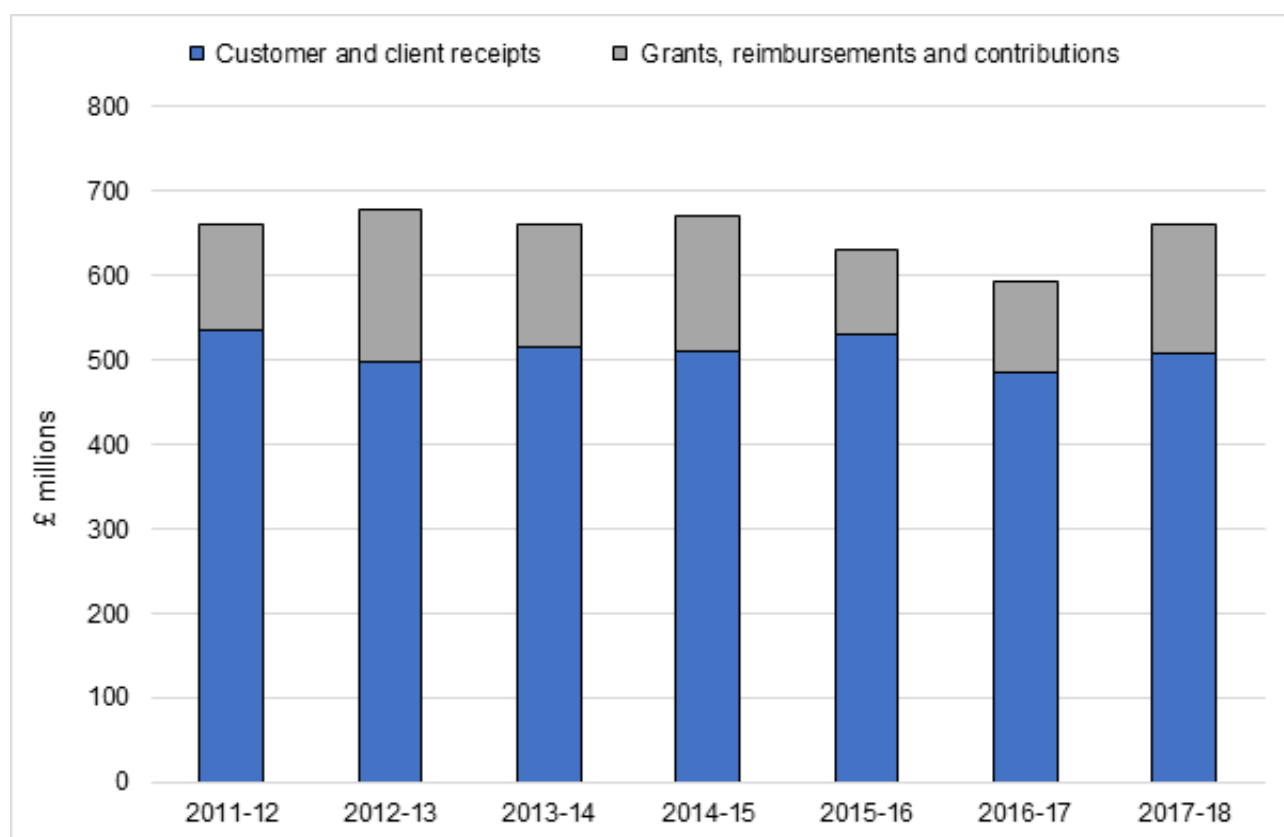


Figure G: sources of income for local authorities from neighbourhood services in real terms (2017/18 prices)

Figure G shows the commercial (customer and client income) and non-commercial income of Scottish local authorities from neighbourhood services in 2017/18 prices.

- Commercial income from neighbourhood services in this period was at a peak of £535m in 2011/12 and a low point of £487m in 2016/17. Over the whole period, commercial income from neighbourhood services shows no trend.
- Non-commercial income peaked in 2012/13 at £181m and was at its low point in 2015/16, at £100m. Since then it has recovered to £154m. Again, there is no trend to be seen.
- Commercial income generally makes up around 80 per cent of total income
- A quarter of commercial income comes from both planning and environmental services; a third comes from roads and transport and the rest from cultural services.
- Nearly half of non-commercial income came from planning and economic development. Roads and transport accounted for a third and cultural services another sixth.



* This time series only goes back to 2011/12 as the way they handled recharges changed from then onwards, as such they are only comparable from then on (See Appendix introduction).

Figure H: 'Commercial income' from neighbourhood services: Scotland, England (% of each country's gross expenditure)

Figure H shows commercial income of Scottish and English local authorities from neighbourhood services as a percentage of their gross expenditure in that year, showing the relative scales of 'commercialisation' of councils.

- Relative levels of commercial income have grown much faster in England (from 20 to 26 per cent) than in Scotland (18 to 20 per cent).
- There are two reasons behind these numbers. First: as can be seen in Figure F, gross spending on neighbourhood services has fallen further in England than in Scotland. This pushes up the relative size of commercial income more in England than in Scotland.
- Second: whilst commercial income has fallen by 5 per cent in Scotland since 2011/12, it has risen by 7 per cent in England.

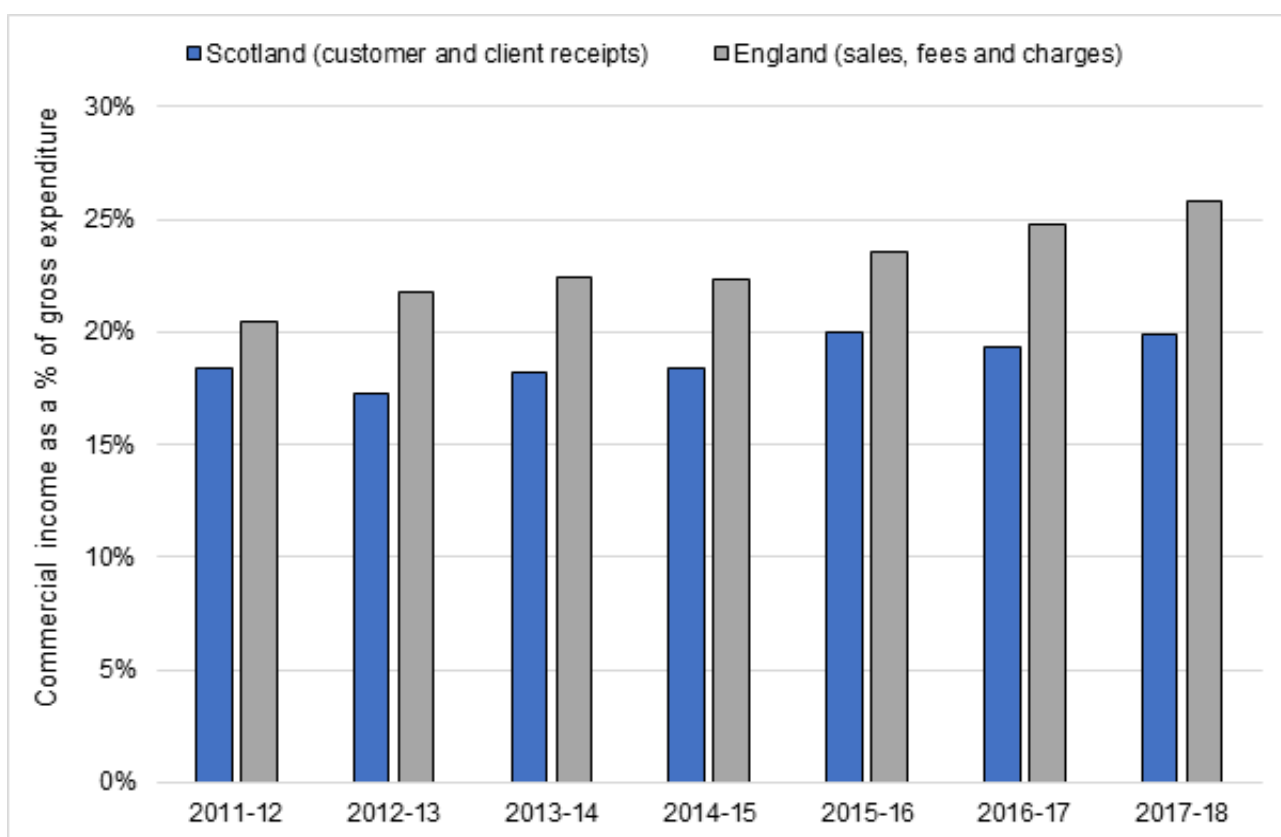
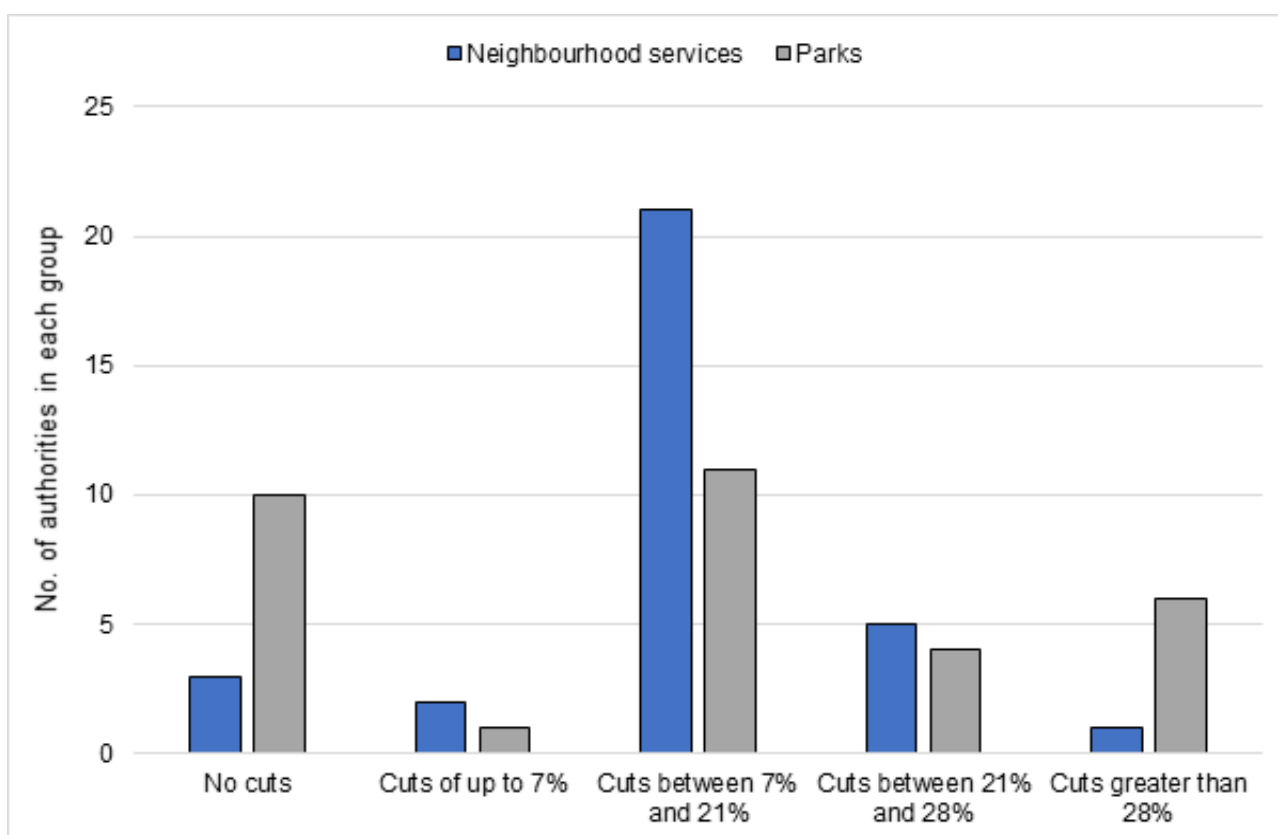


Figure J: number of local authorities by % change in spending per head: parks (2012/13 to 2017/18), neighbourhood services (2011/12 to 2017/18)*

Figure J shows the distribution of cuts for Scottish authorities in per capita spending on both neighbourhood services and parks. They are grouped into 10 per cent bands.

- For neighbourhood services the average level of per capita cuts was 14 per cent and for parks it was 15 per cent.
- The distribution for cuts to neighbourhood services are normally distributed with 14 authorities in the same group as the average, 7 authorities in each group either side of the average, 3 who didn't cut spending and 1 which cut more than 30 per cent.
- The distribution for parks is much more widely spread. The largest group are those authorities which hadn't cut spending despite the average cut being 15 per cent. Two authorities cut less than the average group and 9 authorities were in the same group as the average; 11 authorities cut more than the average with 5 of them cutting more than twice the average.



* Individual local authority data at the level of parks is not available publicly for 2011/12 therefore for this graph the base of 2012/13 is used.



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