

Extent of Urban Greenspace

Urban greenspace, such as public parks, canals and rivers, and sports areas, make a significant contribution to urban biodiversity and landscapes, climate change mitigation and adaptation, our quality of life and quality of place. They contribute to improving physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as helping to attract investment and creating places where people want to live and work. Greenspaces help communities connect and engage with nature which has been shown to have a positive impact on pro-environmental and pro-conservation behaviours.



Father and daughter pond dipping at the Forth & Clyde Canal, Kilpatrick, Copyright George Logan/NatureScot.

The planning and management of greenspace also provides opportunities for communities to engage in local decision making and action, helping to build community cohesion, resilience and empowerment. This indicator monitors the extent of urban green and blue spaces (such as ponds, rivers and canals) as a percentage of urban land area. Understanding changes in the extent, distribution and types of greenspace is essential for the strategic planning and management of Scotland's greenspace assets to enable them to deliver better quality local landscapes.

Evidence

This Indicator uses data from the [Ordnance Survey Greenspace MasterMap](#), the [Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report](#) and the [2017 Greenspace Use and Attitudes Survey](#) to assess the extent of greenspace in urban areas across Scotland. Urban land area is defined by the Scottish Government's two-fold urban - rural classification as settlements with 3000 or more people.

Assessment

In 2017 the total extent of all urban greenspace in Scotland was 159,274ha covering 54% of urban land area.

TREND: Baseline	DATA CONFIDENCE: High
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Commentary

The proportion of greenspace in urban land as of 2017 was 54% making urban Scotland more green than grey. The Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report shows that seven local authorities had greenspace cover less than 50% of their urban land area. Greenspace

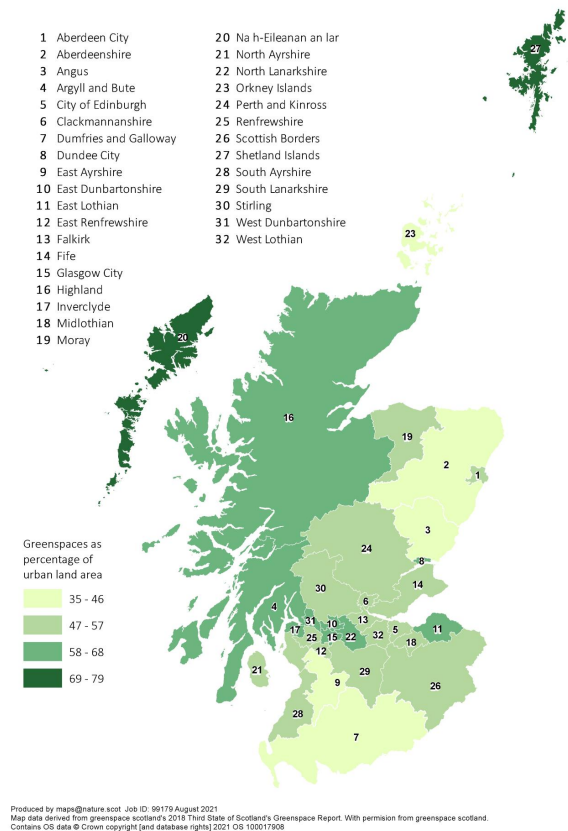
as a percentage of urban area amongst mainland local authorities ranges from 42% in Aberdeenshire and East Ayrshire, to 67% in Argyll and Bute.

The map shows greenspace as a percentage of urban land area by local authority. A larger map is available at Annex 1. A summary of local authority statistics is presented in Table 1 available at Annex 2.

Greenspace Types

The OS Greenspace MasterMap uses [greenspace types](#) defined by their primary function, such as public parks, playing fields and amenity greenspace. Whilst many greenspaces have more than one function, the figures presented here refer to primary functions only. In 2017, 28% of greenspace was classified as private gardens and grounds, with all amenity greenspace types making up a further 37% – together these two types account for two-thirds of Scotland’s greenspace, making a significant contribution to urban landscapes. Natural greenspace accounts for nearly one-fifth (19%) of urban greenspace: this is made up of open semi-natural (8%), woodland (5%), beach or foreshore (4%) and inland water (2%). Public parks and sports areas, which are the public spaces most often used in daily life, account for 4% and 9% of greenspace respectively. Play spaces, allotments and community growing spaces, cemeteries and religious grounds cover relatively small areas (3% in total).

Greenspace as percentage of urban land area in Scotland



A list of all local authorities and the percentages of different primary greenspace types each has, from play parks to natural areas, is presented in Table 2 available at Annex 3.

Publicly Accessible Greenspace

The total area of 'publicly accessible' greenspace (i.e. excluding private gardens and grounds, such as schools and businesses) is 119,299ha or 27ha per 1000 people, which is equivalent to a tennis court size of greenspace per person. The historic settlement and development pattern of cities, towns and neighbourhoods can have a significant impact on the amount, distribution and type of greenspace. The area of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 people ranges in mainland local authorities from 11ha in Glasgow to 71ha in Argyll & Bute. Publicly accessible greenspace as a percentage of urban area in mainland local authorities ranges from 29% in East Ayrshire to 50% in North Lanarkshire and 54% in Argyll & Bute.

Accessible Greenspace

Greenspace matters to people: in 2017 the [Scottish Household Survey](#) (SHS) showed that 92% of people agree to some extent that it is important to have greenspace in their local area, with nearly half (43%) of urban residents visiting their local greenspace at least once a week and over 162 million visits to parks and greenspaces made each year. The SHS in 2017 showed that 65% of adults lived within a 5 minute walk of their nearest greenspace (excluding private gardens), which is an indicator used for [Scotland's National Performance Framework](#). People living in the most deprived areas are less likely to live within a 5 minute walk of their nearest greenspace than people in less deprived areas.

Greenspace Quality

While quantitative data on greenspace are a valuable resource, the full benefits of greenspace can be shown by its quality and how it is experienced, used and valued by people. Key findings from the 2017 Greenspace Use and Attitude Survey shows that the downward trend in the quality of Scotland's parks and greenspaces has continued. [Scottish councils' spend](#) on parks and greenspace service has reduced by 24% between 2011 and 2016. The Survey found that over 70% of respondents agreed strongly that greenspaces should be good places for play, physical activity and relaxation; 66% agreed strongly that greenspace should provide opportunities to see nature; and 53% thought they should be good places to meet others from the local community. Further reports on the State of Scotland's Greenspace will provide an update on work by local authorities to audit their greenspace, assess the quality of these spaces and prepare open space strategies and other plans.

Source data and updates

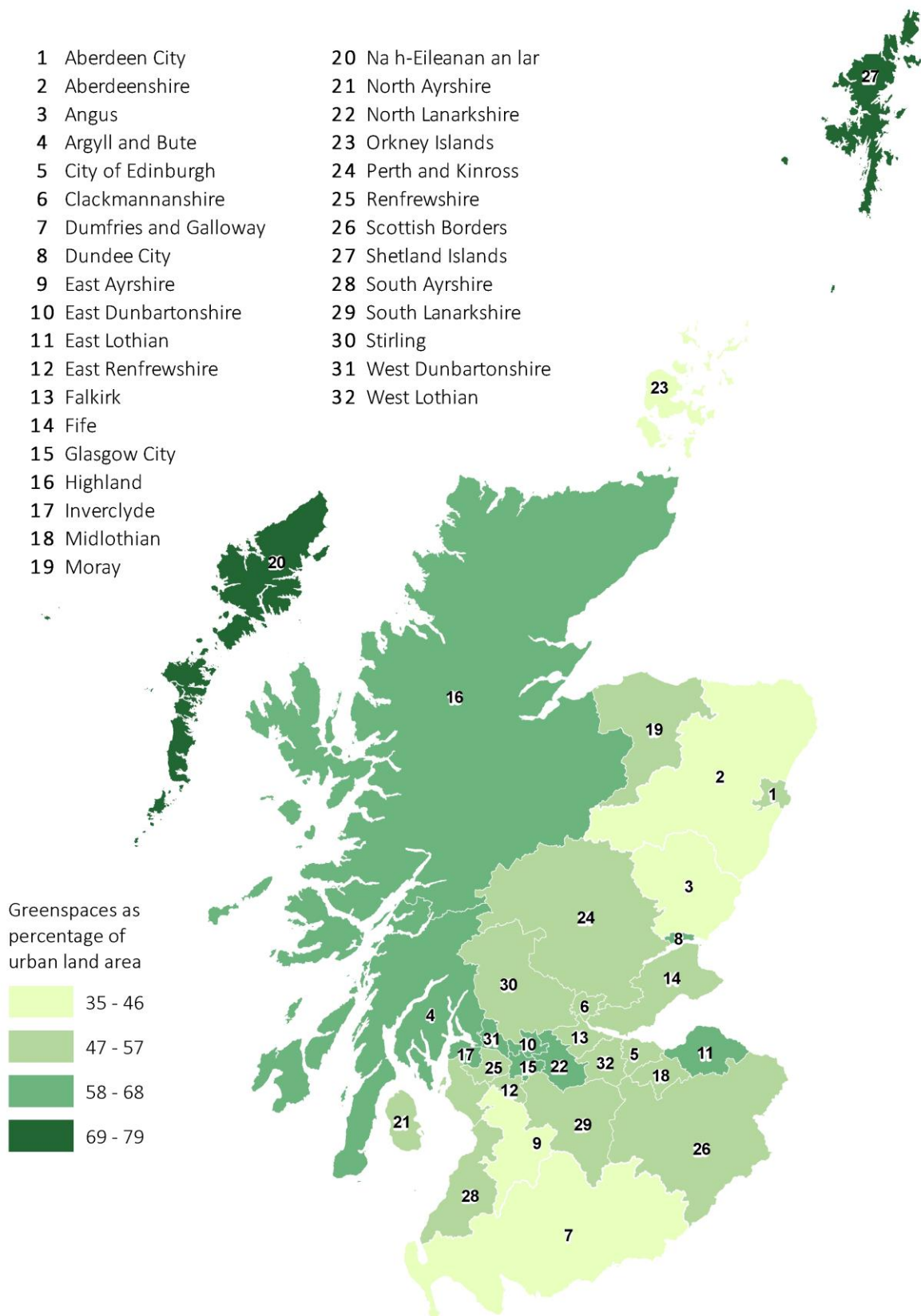
This Indicator will next be updated in 2023. The OS Greenspace MasterMap is updated six monthly. The Scottish Household Survey is carried out annually.

UK indicators

There is no directly comparable UK indicator. [Fields in Trust](#) have produced a [Green Space Index](#) that monitors a minimum standard for greenspace provision across the nations and regions of the UK. Accessible natural greenspace standards by local authority are monitored in [Wales](#). Northern Ireland have not as yet produced any mapping of publicly accessible parks and greenspaces.

Annex 1 – Map showing greenspace as a percentage of urban land area by local authority.

Greenspace as percentage of urban land area in Scotland



Annex 2 - Table 1 presents a summary of local authority statistics

Local Authority	Total Area of greenspace (ha)	Area of publicly accessible greenspace (ha)	Greenspace as percentage of urban area (%)	Publicly accessible greenspace as percentage of urban area (%)	Area of greenspace per 1000 people (ha)	Area of publicly accessible greenspace per 1000 people (ha)
Aberdeen City	6,338	4,600	54	39	29	21
Aberdeenshire	5,858	4,239	42	31	47	34
Angus	3,536	2,603	46	34	42	31
Argyll and Bute	3,768	3,050	67	54	88	71
City of Edinburgh	8,997	6,041	55	37	19	13
Clackmannanshire	2,124	1,679	49	39	48	38
Dumfries and Galloway	4,323	3,180	43	32	53	39
Dundee City	3,478	2,320	62	41	24	16
East Ayrshire	3,171	2,230	42	29	37	26
East Dunbartonshire	3,880	2,628	59	40	39	26
East Lothian	3,242	2,602	58	46	43	35
East Renfrewshire	2,569	1,538	53	32	29	18
Falkirk	6,463	5,035	57	44	45	35
Fife	12,101	9,081	50	37	41	30
Glasgow City	9,647	6,709	58	40	16	11
Highland	9,032	7,430	58	47	77	63
Inverclyde	3,126	2,439	60	46	40	31
Midlothian	2,946	2,223	52	39	42	31
Moray	2,572	1,932	51	38	48	36
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	1,691	1,496	79	70	227	201
North Ayrshire	5,699	4,443	55	43	46	36
North Lanarkshire	12,995	10,248	64	50	42	33
Orkney Islands	342	213	35	22	48	30
Perth and Kinross	4,009	2,903	48	35	50	36
Renfrewshire	5,886	4,416	55	41	35	27
Scottish Borders	3,900	3,189	53	43	65	53
Shetland Islands	880	795	71	64	125	113
South Ayrshire	3,552	2,473	55	38	40	28
South Lanarkshire	9,421	6,733	53	38	34	24
Stirling	3,205	2,479	52	40	53	41
West Dunbartonshire	3,343	2,654	61	48	37	30
West Lothian	7,178	5,697	54	43	45	36
Urban Scotland	159,274	119,299	54	41	36	27

Annex 3 – Table 2 showing the percentages of greenspace types by local authority (primary codes only)

	Public Park Or Garden	Private Garden	School Grounds	Institutional Grounds	Amenity	Play Space	Playing Field	Golf Course	Tennis Court	Bowling Green	Other Sports Facility	Natural	Natural	Natural	Natural	Natural Total	Allotments Or Community	Religious Grounds	Cemetery	Camping Or Caravan Park	Land Use Changing	
Local Authorities												Beach or foreshore	Inland water	Open and semi-natural	Woodland							
Aberdeen City	8%	27%	2%	2%	31%	<1%	2%	6%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	1%	5%	5%	14%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	5%
Aberdeenshire	1%	28%	2%	1%	23%	<1%	2%	7%	<1%	<1%	1%	5%	3%	11%	12%	31%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	3%
Angus	4%	26%	3%	3%	25%	<1%	2%	6%	<1%	<1%	1%	14%	1%	7%	5%	26%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Argyll and Bute	<1%	19%	1%	1%	19%	<1%	1%	5%	<1%	<1%	1%	8%	1%	28%	16%	52%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
City of Edinburgh	7%	33%	3%	3%	28%	<1%	2%	9%	<1%	<1%	1%	4%	2%	3%	2%	10%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Clackmannanshire	1%	21%	2%	1%	37%	<1%	1%	6%	<1%	<1%	<1%	4%	1%	16%	7%	29%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Dumfries and Galloway	1%	26%	2%	2%	25%	<1%	2%	6%	<1%	<1%	1%	6%	3%	12%	9%	30%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Dundee City	6%	33%	3%	3%	32%	<1%	3%	6%	<1%	<1%	2%	6%	1%	2%	1%	10%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
East Ayrshire	4%	30%	3%	1%	31%	<1%	2%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	12%	8%	22%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	2%
East Dunbartonshire	1%	32%	2%	1%	48%	<1%	1%	8%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
East Lothian	4%	20%	3%	1%	34%	<1%	1%	10%	<1%	<1%	1%	11%	1%	4%	2%	19%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	4%
East Renfrewshire	7%	40%	3%	<1%	35%	<1%	2%	8%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	1%
Falkirk	3%	22%	2%	1%	47%	<1%	1%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	8%	3%	3%	3%	17%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Fife	3%	25%	2%	1%	35%	<1%	2%	5%	<1%	<1%	1%	8%	1%	7%	6%	22%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Glasgow City	10%	30%	3%	2%	39%	<1%	2%	4%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	3%
Highland	1%	18%	1%	1%	28%	<1%	1%	4%	<1%	<1%	<1%	9%	2%	19%	12%	43%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Inverclyde	2%	22%	2%	1%	24%	<1%	1%	5%	<1%	<1%	1%	4%	1%	28%	6%	40%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Midlothian	5%	25%	3%	1%	31%	<1%	2%	5%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	14%	9%	25%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%
Moray	3%	25%	3%	1%	31%	<1%	2%	8%	<1%	<1%	<1%	5%	2%	12%	8%	26%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	<1%	12%	<1%	<1%	26%	<1%	<1%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	4%	1%	48%	4%	58%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
North Ayrshire	8%	22%	2%	1%	28%	<1%	1%	6%	<1%	<1%	1%	8%	3%	13%	6%	30%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
North Lanarkshire	2%	21%	2%	1%	62%	<1%	1%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Orkney Islands	<1%	38%	3%	2%	25%	1%	1%	7%	<1%	<1%	4%	8%	3%	2%	2%	14%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	4%
Perth and Kinross	3%	28%	3%	1%	19%	<1%	1%	12%	<1%	<1%	2%	5%	3%	11%	10%	28%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Renfrewshire	5%	25%	2%	1%	50%	<1%	2%	6%	<1%	<1%	2%	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	2%
Scottish Borders	4%	18%	1%	<1%	31%	<1%	2%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	4%	14%	16%	35%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Shetland Islands	<1%	10%	1%	<1%	22%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	5%	7%	52%	<1%	63%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
South Ayrshire	2%	30%	2%	1%	25%	<1%	2%	14%	<1%	<1%	3%	12%	1%	3%	2%	18%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
South Lanarkshire	4%	29%	2%	1%	46%	<1%	2%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	4%	3%	9%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	2%
Stirling	4%	23%	2%	4%	32%	<1%	1%	3%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	2%	10%	14%	28%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%
West Dunbartonshire	4%	21%	2%	1%	51%	<1%	2%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	8%	3%	<1%	<1%	11%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
West Lothian	4%	21%	2%	1%	59%	<1%	1%	4%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	2%	2%	2%	6%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Urban Scotland	4%	25%	2%	1%	37%	<1%	2%	6%	<1%	<1%	1%	4%	2%	8%	5%	19%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	2%