

LLC3 Urban Vacant and Derelict Land

This indicator monitors the extent of urban vacant and derelict land (V&DL) as registered by Scottish Local Authorities through the [Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey](#) (SVDLS). Vacant and derelict land is viewed as degraded and appropriate for some form of development and re-use. Many of these sites are potentially hazardous, visually unattractive, and detract from the quality of life of nearby communities. However, some vacant and derelict land can be of value for biodiversity, contain important landscape features or provide opportunities for informal recreation and play. Prior to re-using vacant and derelict land consideration should be given to the nature that has colonised the sites, its landscape features which may be worth retaining and how people might have used these areas whilst they have lain undeveloped. For such sites, there are potential opportunities for long-term regeneration, to improve health and wellbeing, help us tackle climate change, create more resilient communities and enable more sustainable place making. Using nature-based solutions to rehabilitate these sites would also help to optimise the multiple benefits delivered.



Dumbreck Marsh Local Nature Reserve previously a derelict site covered in coke and coal waste.
Copyright George Logan/NatureScot

“Vacant” land is defined as land which is unused for the purposes for which it is held and is viewed as an appropriate site for beneficial use or development. This land must either have had prior development or had preparatory work taken place in anticipation of future re-use. “Derelict” land is defined as land which has been so damaged by development that it is incapable of further use without rehabilitation. The statistics presented on “vacant” land throughout this indicator refer to land located in settlements with a population of over 2,000 (as defined in council local plans) i.e. “urban vacant” land. Statistics on “derelict” land refer to all of Scotland’s land area. In total, around a third of all urban vacant and derelict land across Scotland has not been developed for at least 25 years.

Scotland’s [Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce](#) has produced a report and recommendations aimed at transforming the existing approach to bringing vacant and derelict land back into use. The Taskforce recognised the value of the [Vacant and Derelict Land Register](#) and suggested improvements to better enable regeneration. The Register as it stands does not provide a complete or comprehensive picture of the status of vacant and derelict land in Scotland, nor does it include sites under 0.1 hectares. Scottish Land Commission research has shown that many smaller sites tend to negatively impact communities and are often clustered in settlements with higher rates of multiple deprivation.

Evidence

This Indicator uses the SVDLS data directly from the Scottish Government and the [Spatial Hub](#). The SVDLS has been operating since 1988. In 2017 the Scottish Government published a summary of results that included a revision of collected data that presented an accurate time series analysis from 2011 to 2017. This report provides the data for our assessment below. Therefore, this Indicator sets a baseline at 2017 when the Scottish Government published this analysis.

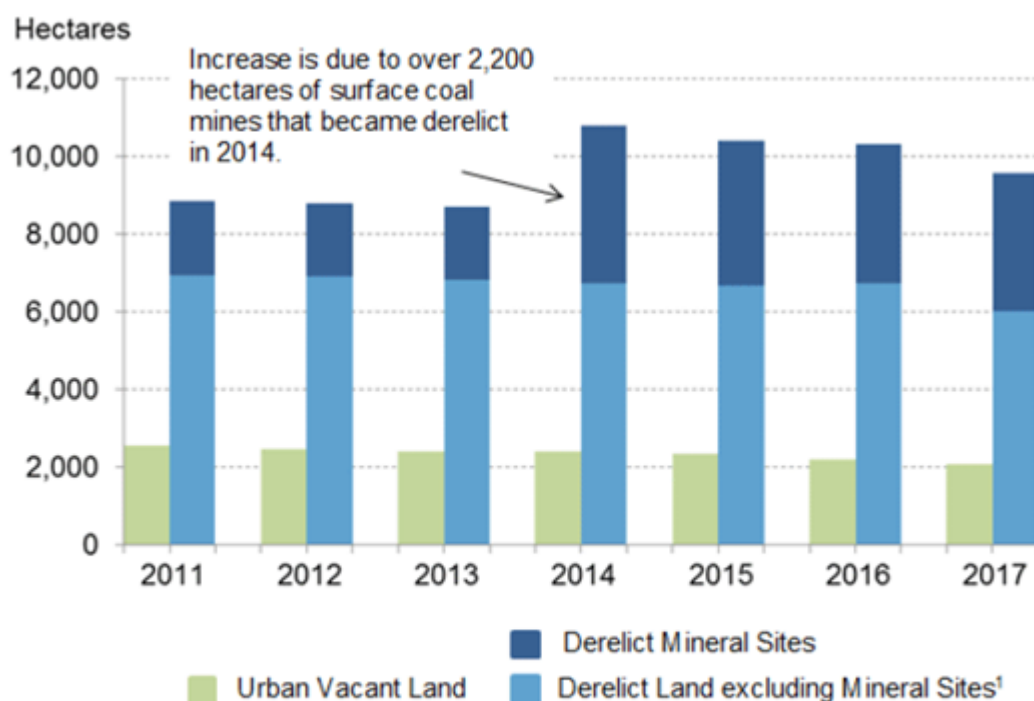
TREND: Baseline	DATA CONFIDENCE: High
------------------------	------------------------------

Assessment

In 2017, the total area of urban vacant and derelict land in Scotland was 11,649 hectares.

The area of urban vacant and derelict land showed a net increase of 2% between 2011 and 2017. This increase was largely due to an additional 2,217 hectares of land being included in 2014 after areas of former surface coal mine sites in East Ayrshire became derelict.

From 2016 to 2017 the amount of urban vacant and derelict land decreased by 844 hectares (7%). This resulted from 780 hectares being re-used or changed and 293 hectares naturalised (meaning sites dominated by colonised vegetation), minus 229 hectares of newly identified urban vacant and derelict land. The graph below (from the SVDLS 2017 report) shows the amount of urban vacant and derelict land from the years 2011 to 2017.



1. Mineral sites include sites where there was previously coal, crushed rock, sand/gravel, shale, fireclay, limestone or other mineral activity.

Commentary

Across Scotland, 35% of urban vacant and derelict land can be thought of as being uneconomic to develop and/or is viewed as suitable to reclaim for a 'soft' end use (i.e. non-built use). The most common new use for sites that were previously urban vacant and derelict land was for residential development, with 50% of sites reclaimed for this purpose.

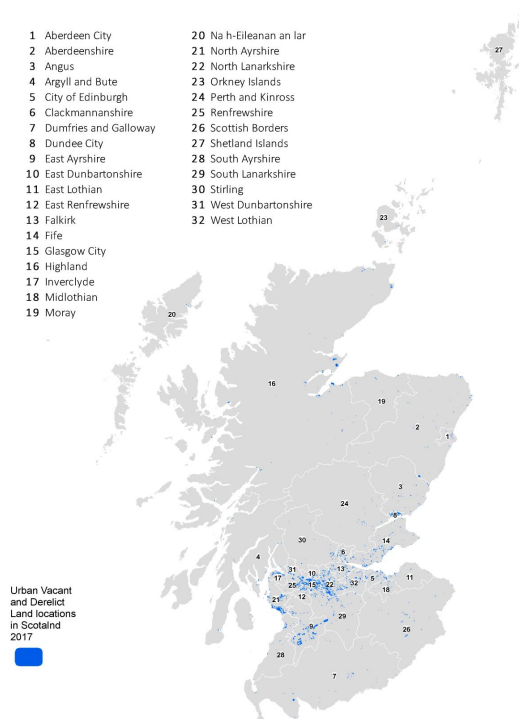
Reclamation should consider how best to retain or enhance the existing biodiversity and landscape features on site, as these can be of value and help create better outcomes for people and nature. [The UK Biodiversity Action Plan](#) lists Open Mosaic Habitat on previously developed land as a priority habitat. A [NatureScot commissioned report](#) noted that strategically it would be good to retain some habitat which is important for invertebrates (and other species), such as Open Mosaic Habitat.

On average, 339 hectares of urban vacant and derelict land per year was reclaimed between 2011 and 2016. In 2017 there was a notable increase in reclamation with 857 hectares of urban vacant and derelict land reclaimed on 317 sites. The Scottish Land Commission provides [examples of transformed vacant and derelict land](#) that includes places to connect with nature, to play and to help tackle climate change e.g. through natural flood management. The [Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention fund projects](#) provide additional examples of sites brought back into multi-functional use, including for biodiversity and climate change, with community participation, place-making, health and well-being benefits.

The map shows the locations of urban vacant and derelict land in Scotland in 2017. A larger map is available at Annex 1.

Urban Vacant and Derelict Land locations in Scotland 2017

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Aberdeen City | 20 Na h-Eileanan an Iar |
| 2 Aberdeenshire | 21 North Ayrshire |
| 3 Angus | 22 North Lanarkshire |
| 4 Argyll and Bute | 23 Orkney Islands |
| 5 City of Edinburgh | 24 Perth and Kinross |
| 6 Clackmannanshire | 25 Renfrewshire |
| 7 Dumfries and Galloway | 26 Scottish Borders |
| 8 Dundee City | 27 Shetland Islands |
| 9 East Ayrshire | 28 South Ayrshire |
| 10 East Dunbartonshire | 29 South Lanarkshire |
| 11 East Lothian | 30 Stirling |
| 12 East Renfrewshire | 31 West Dunbartonshire |
| 13 Falkirk | 32 West Lothian |
| 14 Fife | |
| 15 Glasgow City | |
| 16 Highland | |
| 17 Inverclyde | |
| 18 Midlothian | |
| 19 Moray | |



Urban Vacant and Derelict Land locations in Scotland 2017

Produced by maps@nature.scot Job ID: 99159 September 2021
Map data derived from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2017 report and the Spatial Hub
Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2021 OS 100017908

The Table at Annex 2 shows the total urban vacant and derelict land by Local Authority Area from 2011 to 2017. Five local authorities contain almost two thirds of all recorded urban vacant and derelict land in Scotland. East Ayrshire has the largest amount with 2,401 hectares (21% of the Scotland total), Highland has the second largest amount with 1,342 hectares (12%), North Ayrshire is third with 1,335 hectares (11%), followed by North Lanarkshire with 1,282 hectares (11%) then Glasgow City with 1,069 hectares (9%). For those sites across Scotland where the previous use is known, 38% of derelict land recorded in 2017 had been previously used for mineral activity (3,559 hectares), 21% for manufacturing (1,922 hectares), and a further 14% for defence (1,260 hectares). For urban vacant land, the largest area was previously in residential use (17%, 302 hectares) and the second largest area had a previous use for agriculture (16%, 279 hectares).

The change in the recorded amount of urban vacant and derelict land during 2011 to 2017 varies by local authority. 24 local authorities had decreases in levels of recorded urban vacant and derelict land, including Renfrewshire (down 72%), Midlothian (down 57%) and Dumfries and Galloway (down 35%). Eight local authorities recorded more urban vacant and derelict land in 2017 than they did in 2011, including East Ayrshire, Clackmannanshire and Argyll and Bute.

The legacy of Scotland's industrial past means that in 2017 almost a third of Scotland's population lived within 500 metres of a derelict site. This varies by local authority area from 1.0% in Orkney to 61.7% in Glasgow and 75.8% in North Lanarkshire. 59% of people living in the most deprived areas (identified by the '[Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)') in Scotland are estimated to live within 500 metres of derelict land, compared to 12% of people in the least deprived areas. In 2017, Glasgow City had the largest amount of urban vacant and derelict land located within the 15% most deprived areas. The map shows the

percentage of the population, per local authority, living within 500m of a derelict site in 2017. A larger map is available at Annex 3.

The statistics from the SVDLS are used by the Scottish Government to help allocate and monitor the impact of the [Vacant and Derelict Land Fund](#). Since its inception in 2005/06, the Fund has contributed (either fully or partially) to the reuse of 386 hectares of previously urban vacant and derelict land across Dundee City, Glasgow City, Highland, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and Fife. Overall, 51% of all residential properties within 500 metres of land reclaimed using the programme were situated within Scotland's 15% most deprived areas. The Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce continues its collaborative work with local authorities to transform vacant and derelict land back into productive use. Its [reports](#) to the Scottish Government are available on its website.

The [DUSTE map](#) is a useful resource to proactively identify opportunities to reuse long-term, derelict urban sites. A [community-led action on vacant and derelict land guide](#) is available to bring unloved places back into use in collaboration with local communities.

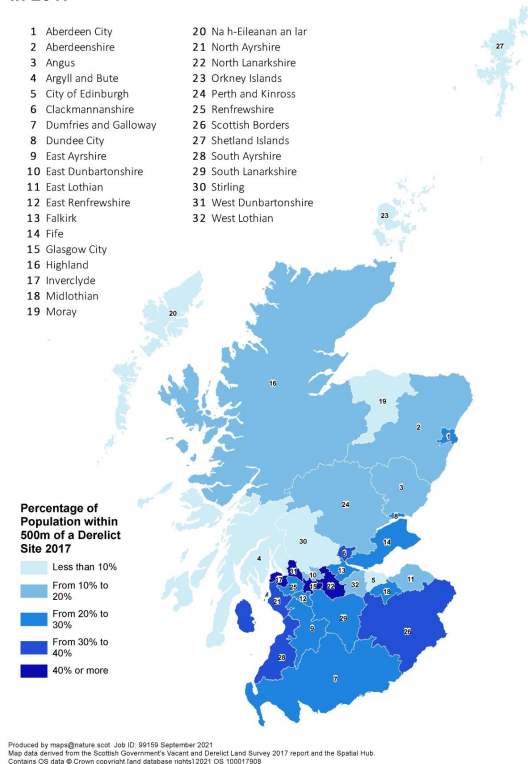
Source data and updates

This Indicator uses the SVDLS data directly from the Scottish Government and the Spatial Hub. The indicator will be updated next in 2023.

UK indicators

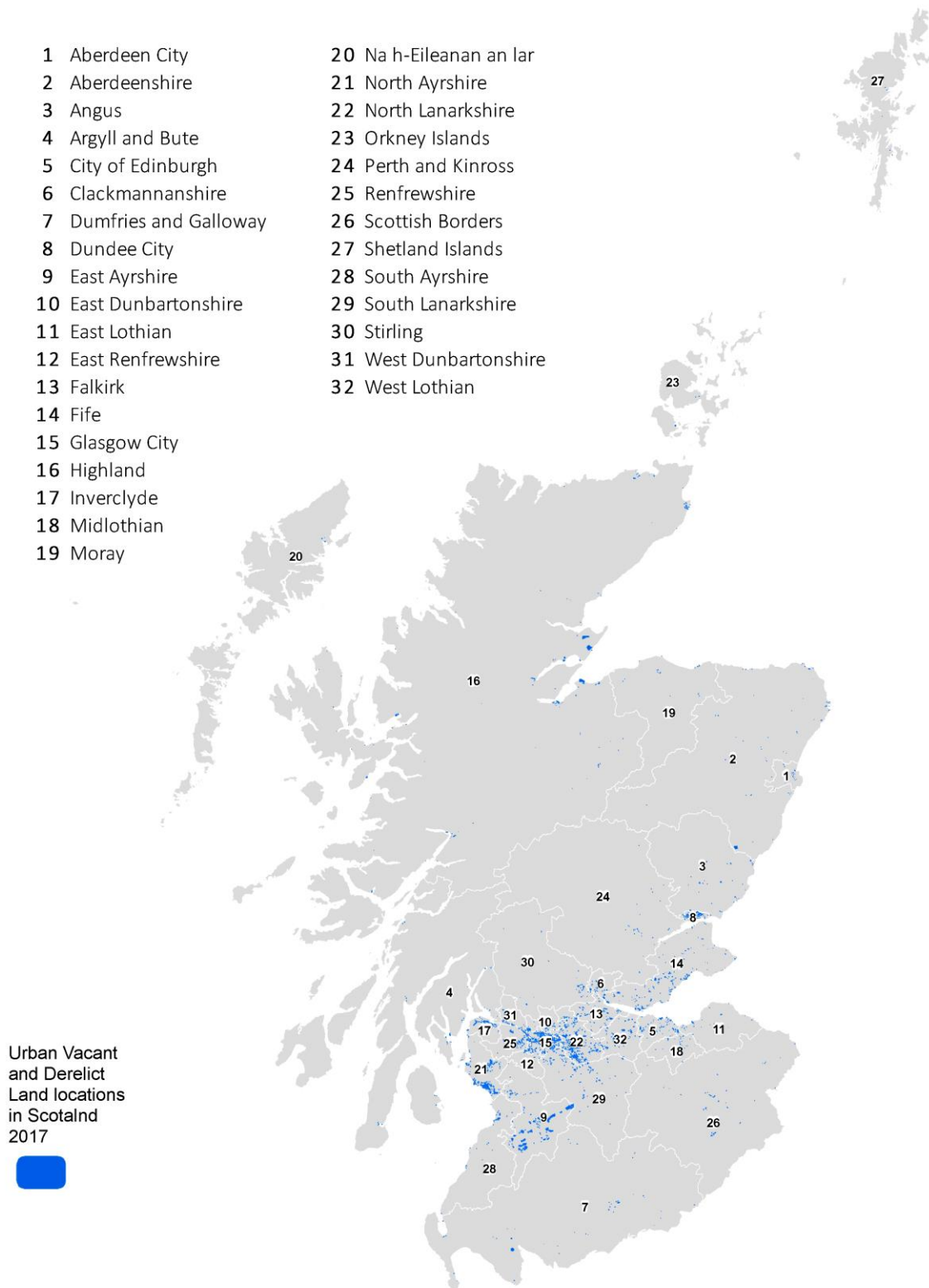
There is no directly comparable UK indicator. The [National Land Use Database](#) (NLUD) classifies land use in England. HMRC will accept the NLUD as evidence as to whether land is derelict. In Wales, each Local Planning Authority reports on vacant and derelict land in their Annual Monitoring Reports.

Percentage of Population living within 500m of a Derelict Site in 2017



Annex 1 – Map showing Urban Vacant and Derelict Land locations in Scotland in 2017

Urban Vacant and Derelict Land locations in Scotland 2017



Annex 2 - Table showing total Urban Vacant and Derelict Land by Local Authority Area from 2011 to 2017

Local Authority	Total Urban Vacant and Derelict Land Area (ha)							% Change 2011-2017
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Aberdeen City	50	54	52	46	37	38	35	-30%
Aberdeenshire	81	83	75	71	71	79	80	-2%
Angus	170	173	173	183	164	142	144	-15%
Argyll & Bute	29	34	34	31	59	58	58	100%
Clackmannanshire	29	21	28	36	32	74	64	119%
Dumfries & Galloway	491	492	492	491	463	465	320	-35%
Dundee City	198	187	196	211	215	204	182	-8%
East Ayrshire	335	335	351	2,553	2,541	2,457	2,401	617%
East Dunbartonshire	65	71	66	62	71	77	76	17%
East Lothian	83	65	67	65	86	90	87	5%
East Renfrewshire	54	55	60	60	55	55	51	-6%
Edinburgh, City of	223	211	213	208	184	168	178	-20%
Falkirk	159	159	173	187	200	246	286	79%
Fife	872	853	859	864	654	650	652	-25%
Glasgow City	1,305	1,239	1,196	1,171	1,145	1,111	1,069	-18%
Highland	1,455	1,455	1,382	1,373	1,342	1,342	1,342	-8%
Inverclyde	123	141	149	146	163	160	156	26%
Loch Lomond & the Trossachs	35	32	31	31	28	28	28	n/a
Midlothian	272	271	270	216	197	189	118	-57%
Moray	19	17	22	21	15	15	15	-19%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	-11%
North Ayrshire	1,353	1,344	1,338	1,345	1,335	1,330	1,335	-1%
North Lanarkshire	1,419	1,373	1,303	1,297	1,262	1,226	1,282	-10%
Orkney Islands	41	41	39	39	39	39	39	-6%
Perth & Kinross	50	50	53	56	56	49	42	-16%
Renfrewshire	956	981	957	927	913	860	272	-72%
Scottish Borders	84	86	82	76	75	75	70	-16%
Shetland Islands	9	8	8	7	6	6	7	-21%
South Ayrshire	97	97	102	101	107	106	105	8%
South Lanarkshire	476	470	475	472	461	411	422	-11%
Stirling	175	177	175	164	163	152	148	-15%
West Dunbartonshire	194	193	188	189	182	171	165	-15%
West Lothian	478	478	478	484	413	413	413	-14%
Scotland	11,391	11,256	11,100	13,192	12,744	12,493	11,649	2%

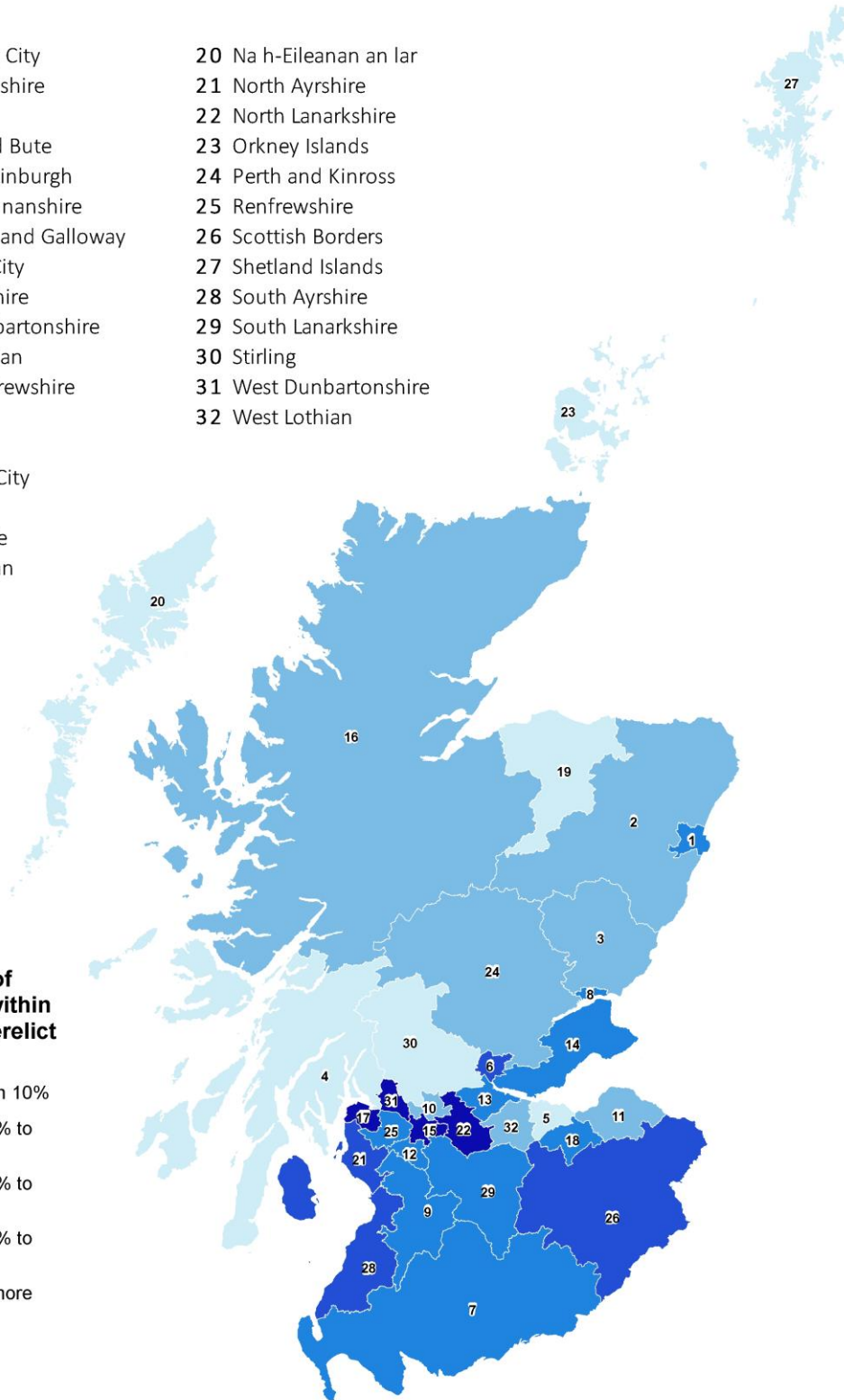
Annex 3 – Map showing percentage of population, per local authority, living within 500m of a derelict site in 2017

Percentage of Population living within 500m of a Derelict Site in 2017

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Aberdeen City | 20 Na h-Eileanan an Iar |
| 2 Aberdeenshire | 21 North Ayrshire |
| 3 Angus | 22 North Lanarkshire |
| 4 Argyll and Bute | 23 Orkney Islands |
| 5 City of Edinburgh | 24 Perth and Kinross |
| 6 Clackmannanshire | 25 Renfrewshire |
| 7 Dumfries and Galloway | 26 Scottish Borders |
| 8 Dundee City | 27 Shetland Islands |
| 9 East Ayrshire | 28 South Ayrshire |
| 10 East Dunbartonshire | 29 South Lanarkshire |
| 11 East Lothian | 30 Stirling |
| 12 East Renfrewshire | 31 West Dunbartonshire |
| 13 Falkirk | 32 West Lothian |
| 14 Fife | |
| 15 Glasgow City | |
| 16 Highland | |
| 17 Inverclyde | |
| 18 Midlothian | |
| 19 Moray | |

Percentage of Population within 500m of a Derelict Site 2017

- Less than 10%
- From 10% to 20%
- From 20% to 30%
- From 30% to 40%
- 40% or more



Produced by maps@nature.scot Job ID: 99159 September 2021
 Map data derived from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2017 report and the Spatial Hub.
 Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2021 OS 100017908