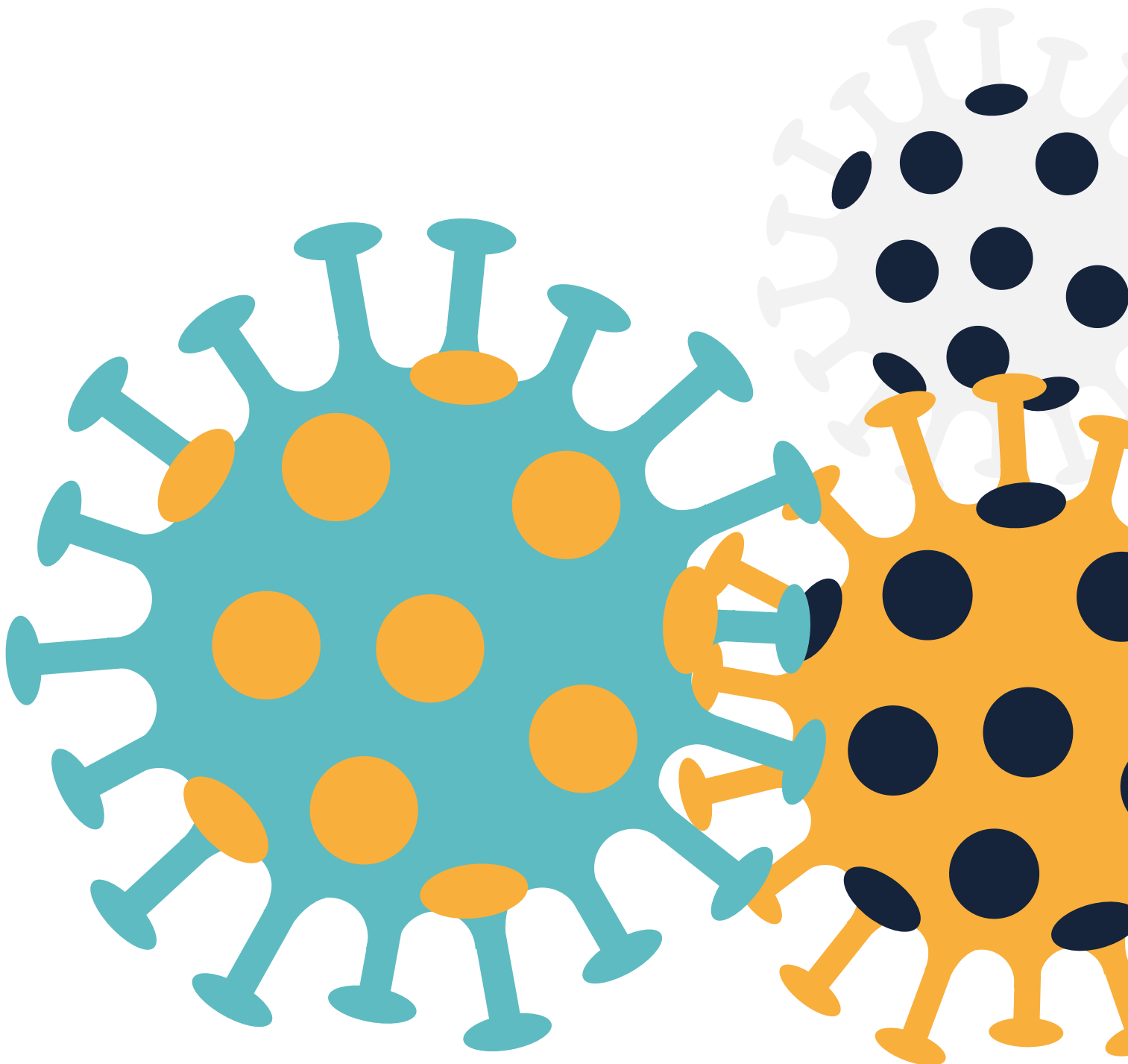


apse

The impact of Covid-19 on performance management in UK local government

April – June 2020



Introduction

The impact of austerity on neighbourhood services has been huge, APSE estimated that we need a further £3.2B per annum just to take us back to minimum sustainable level which we passed in 2015/16. The Covid-19 pandemic arrived at a time when resources are already significantly reduced for local government.

APSE introduced a new quarterly data collection exercise to assess the impact of Covid-19 on a range of front-line services. To facilitate this process, APSE established service specific working groups to identify questions under the headings of cost, income, productivity and quality which could be assessed for the quarter.

This report relates to the first quarter of 2020 (April – June) and shows the averages for individual services from participating authorities. We received 115 returns for this project from local authorities throughout the UK.

This analysis has focuses on the following key areas across the service areas:

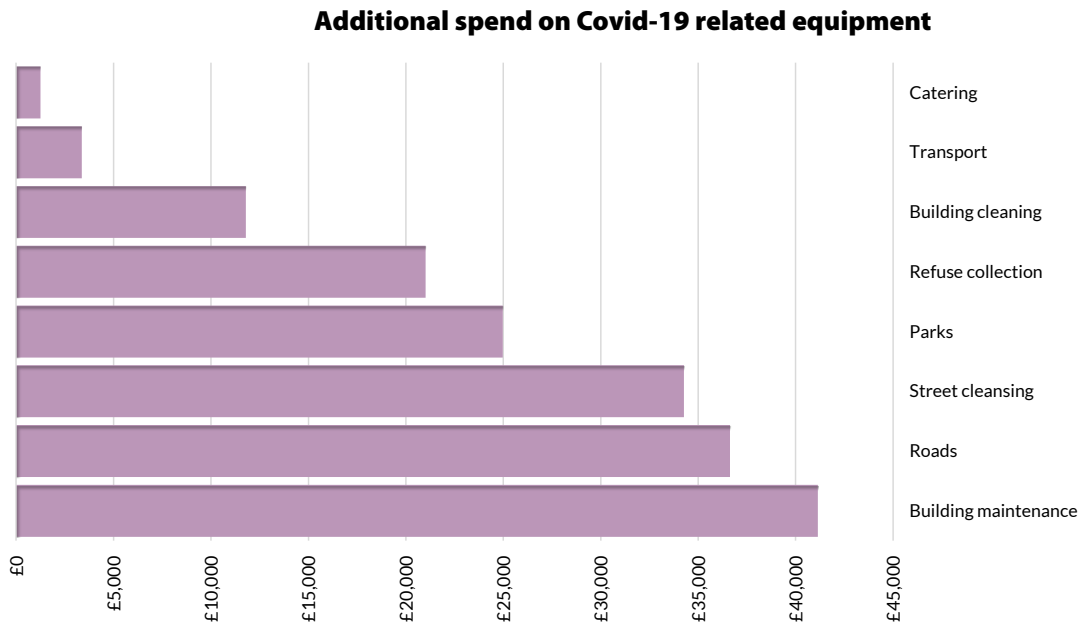
- Expenditure
- Income
- Impact on employees
- Service standards
- Service requests
- Service usage
- Works data
- Streetscene
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Refuse collection
- Fuel consumption

Whilst this report provides data for the first quarter only, further data collection exercises will be conducted for subsequent quarters, subject to demand. This data and analysis will support our member councils to assess their performance comparative with others, within their specific service sector.

This report can be viewed in conjunction with other reports that have been produced by APSE, such as resilience surveys and remobilisation reports. These can be found on the Covid-19 support hub on the APSE website. Please click [here](#) to access the hub.

Expenditure

Each service listed has faced additional spend as a result of Covid-19 related protective equipment / signage / materials e.g. PPE / contract cleaning / cleaning costs. This, however, won't cover expenditure that has been allocated out of central budgets. For building maintenance this is in excess of £40k for the first quarter alone.



In addition, services have faced their own additional costs. The cost of the additional specification for building cleaning is in excess of £40k, the additional cost of agency/overtime to cover for refuse collection is in excess of £37k and the transport section needing to hire in on average an additional 8.5 vehicles.

Cost of additional specification for building cleaning	£41,105
Refuse additional cost of agency/overtime to cover	£37,728
Additional vehicles hired in by the Transport section	8.50

Income

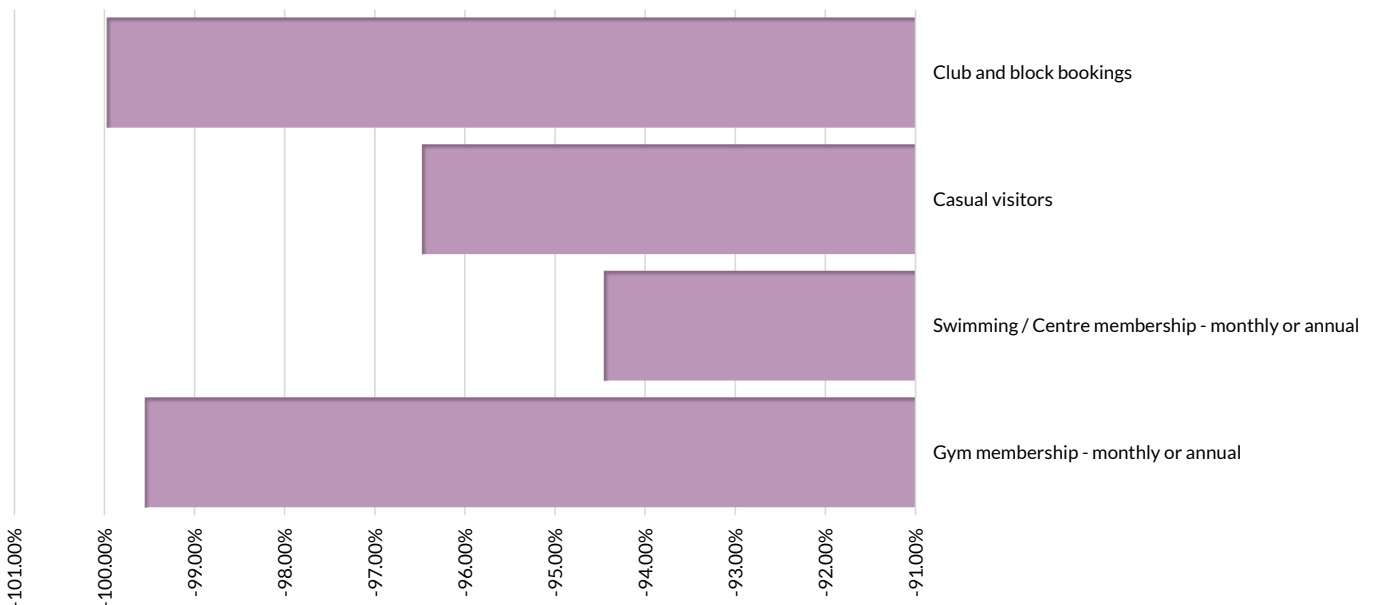
Income lost against anticipated budget for the first quarter is on average over £1.5 million for leisure, nearly £120k for parks and nearly £100k for refuse collection.

The anticipated loss of income for building maintenance is 44%, and over 60% of income compared to the budget estimate will be lost from private MOT and taxi testing.

	Average revenue income collected for the first quarter	25% of average annual budget estimate for 2020/21	Difference
Leisure Management	£36,083	£1,556,874	−£1,520,792
Parks and Open Spaces	£354,811	£473,901	−£119,090
Refuse Collection	£248,635	£341,053	−£92,417
Building maintenance anticipate loss (%) of income for the first quarter			44%
Income loss compared to budget estimate from private MOTs			64%
Income loss compared to budget estimate from taxi testing			65%

The chart below shows the income from activities which have been affected by the closure of leisure centres, the highest losses being for gym membership and club and block bookings.

Leisure income by activity compared with the same period last year



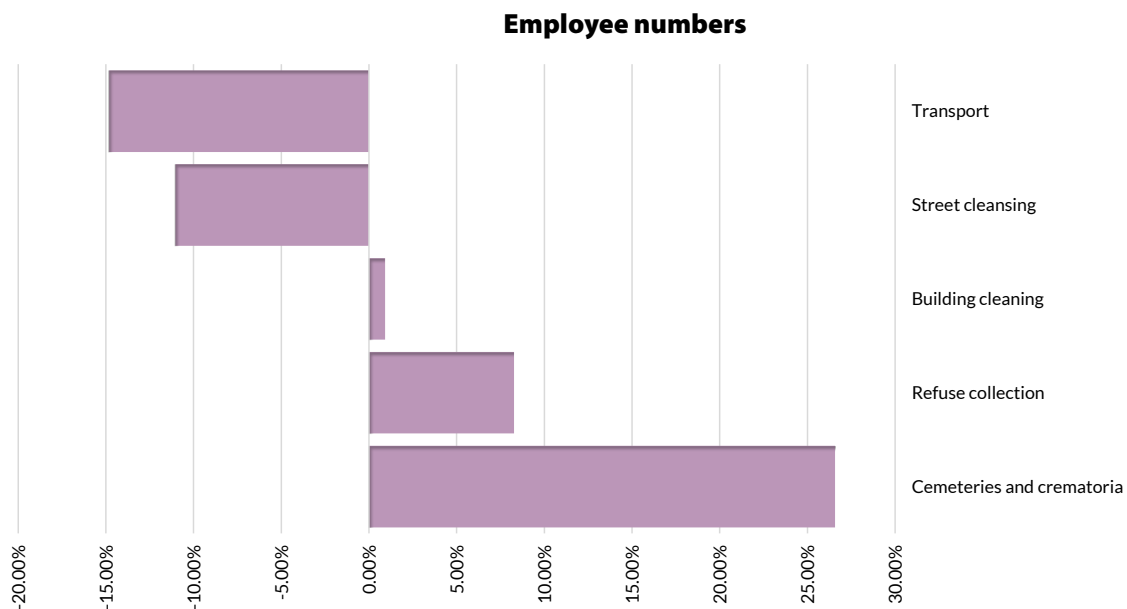
For refuse collection, if we look at the trends pre-Covid-19, including the latest data set for 2019-20, there is a steady increase up to March 2020 on discountable income which includes income from things like trade waste collections, green waste collections and bulky collections. This may well change for the coming data collection year with the reductions in income for the first quarter of 2020.



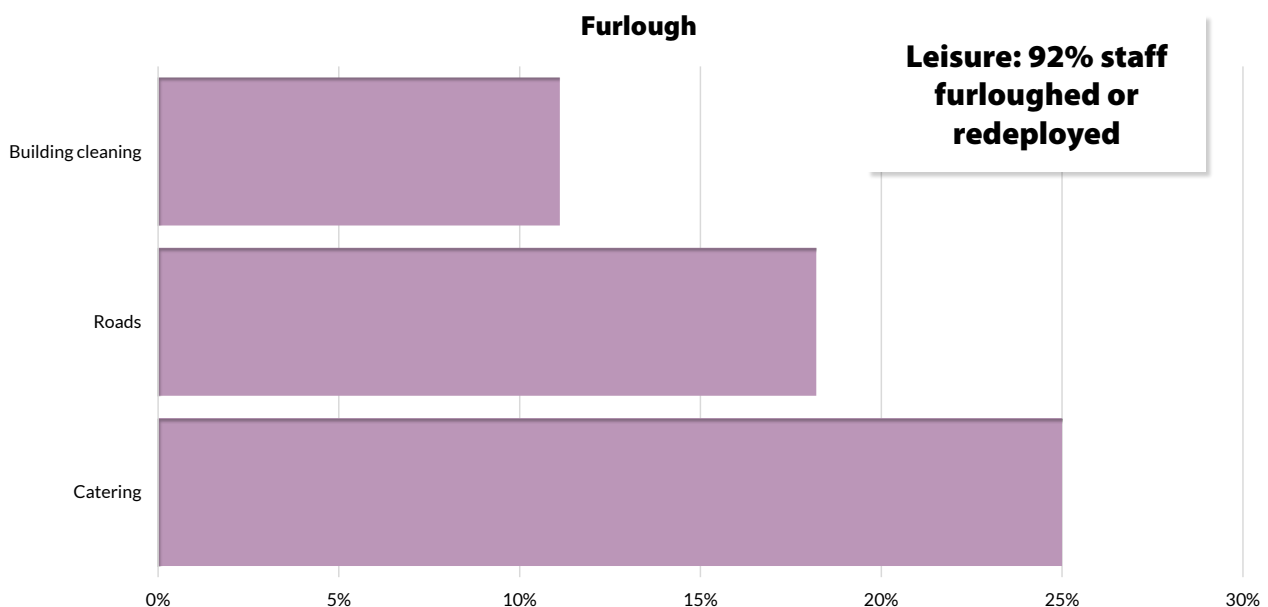
Impact on employees

For the number of employees in March compared to May 2020, there was a decline in numbers for transport and street cleansing and an increase in refuse collection and cemeteries and crematoria.

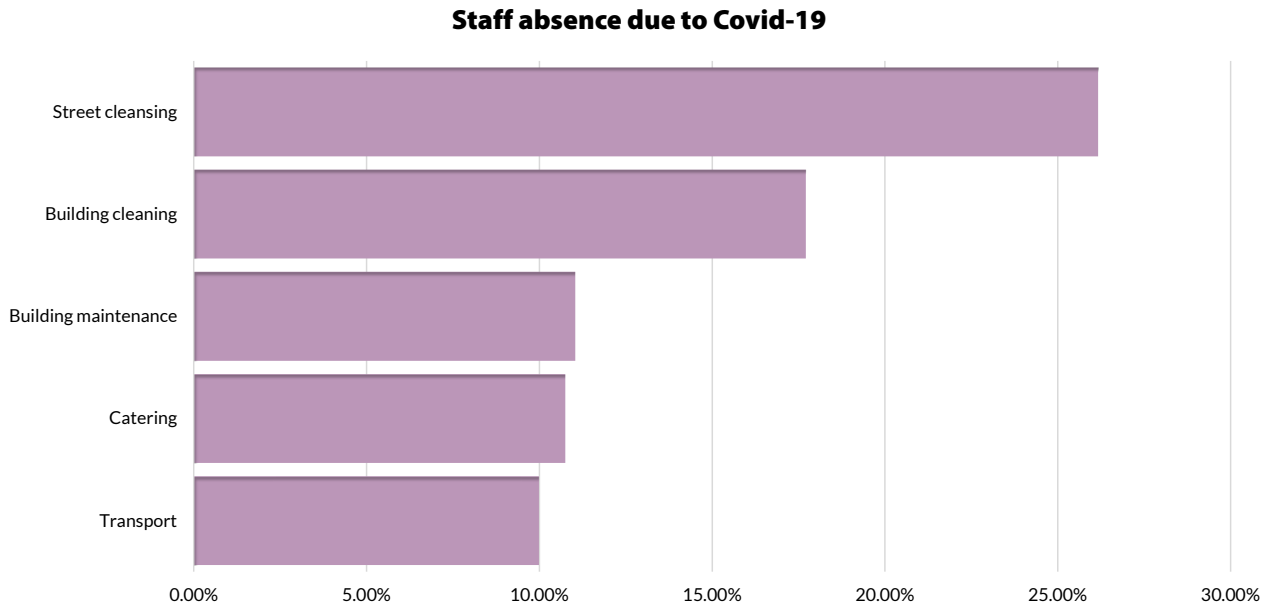
For building cleaning, although operational employee posts deployed increased slightly during this period, there was a marked fall in hours deployed primarily due to school closures.



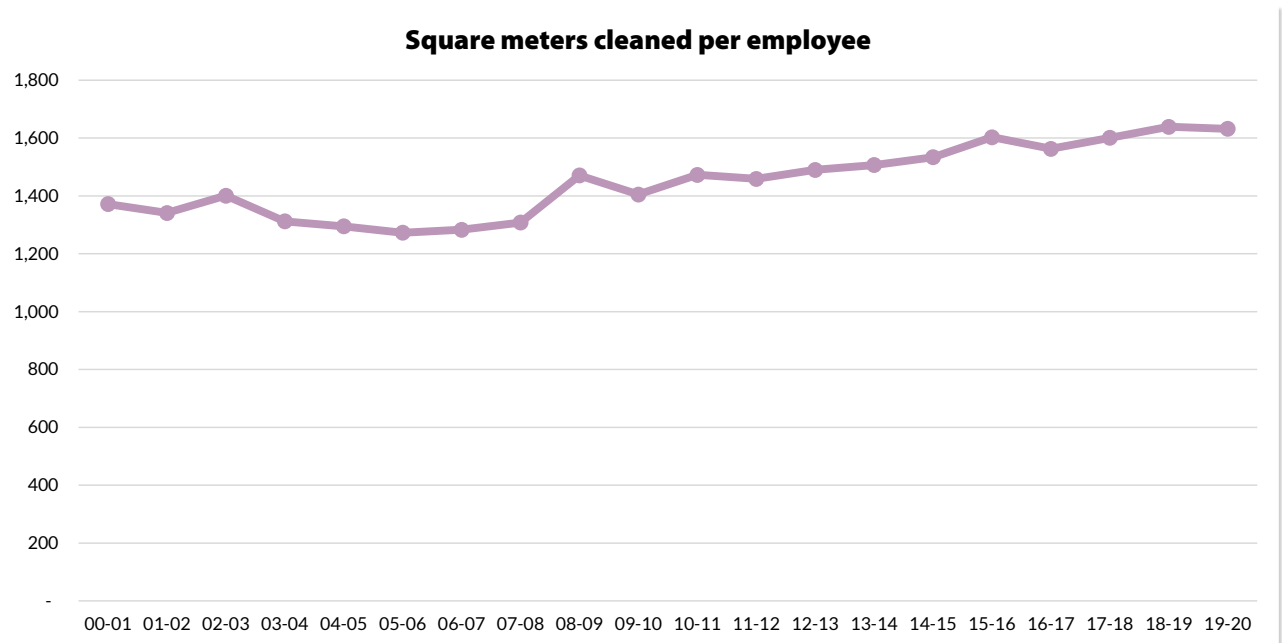
The percentage of authorities who furloughed staff is shown below and this applies to about a quarter of authorities for catering. For leisure, on average 92% of leisure staff were either furloughed or redeployed.



Staff absence due to Covid-19 including isolation, shielding, and Covid-19 related illness ranges from about 10% for transport to over 25% for street cleansing.

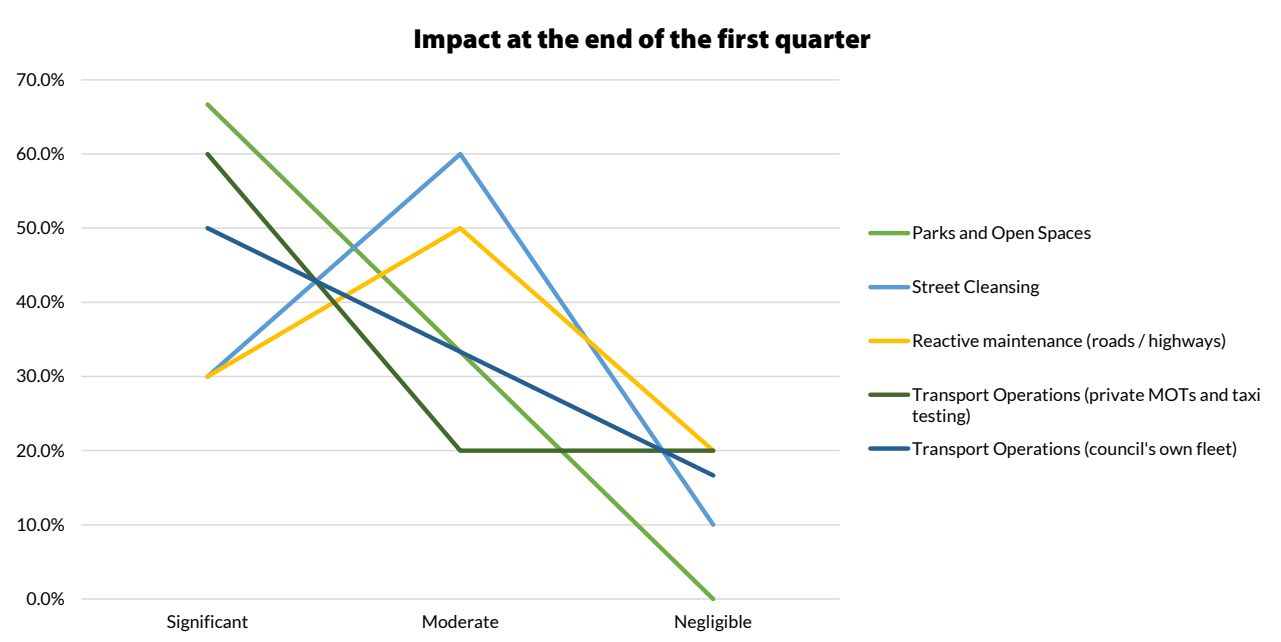


The impact of the pandemic on staff may well affect performance on productivity for the 2020-21 data collection this coming year. The chart below shows past performance for building cleaning for square meters cleaned per employee. This has improved greatly over the past 15 years levelling off for the most recent figures.



Service standards

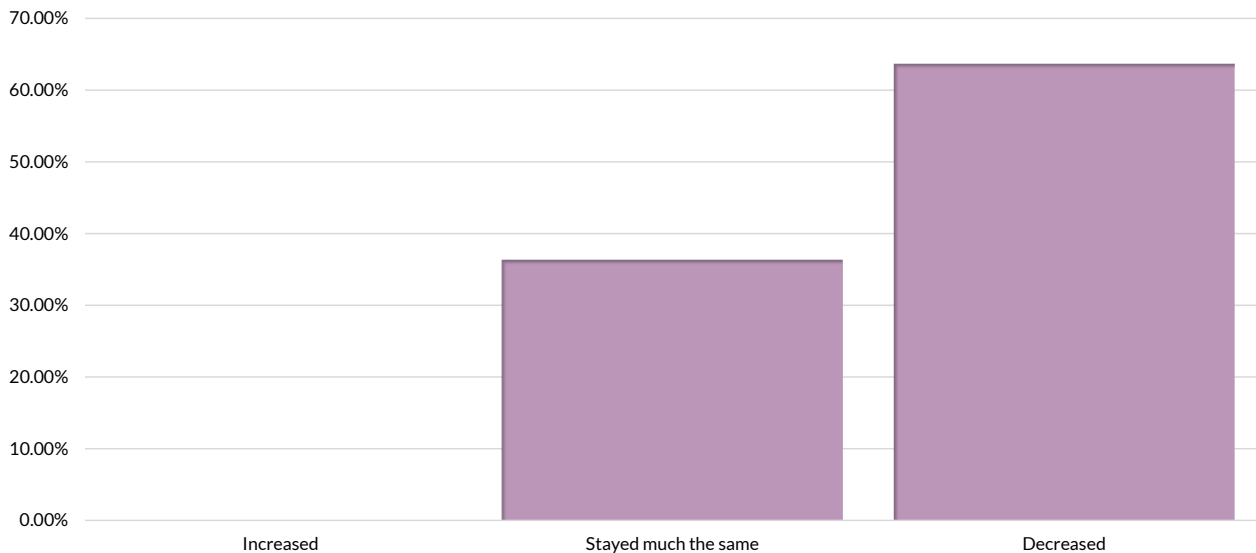
How has Covid-19 impacted on service standards? We asked for opinions from council officers on the impact at the end of the first quarter. For most of the services above this was a 'significant' or 'moderate' impact. Parks and transport were viewed as being impact on a 'significant' scale.



Service requests

In roads and highways, the majority of authorities reported a decrease in service or public enquiries. This is likely to reflect the lower public use of the road/highway asset in the first quarter although the number of road users increased since this period.

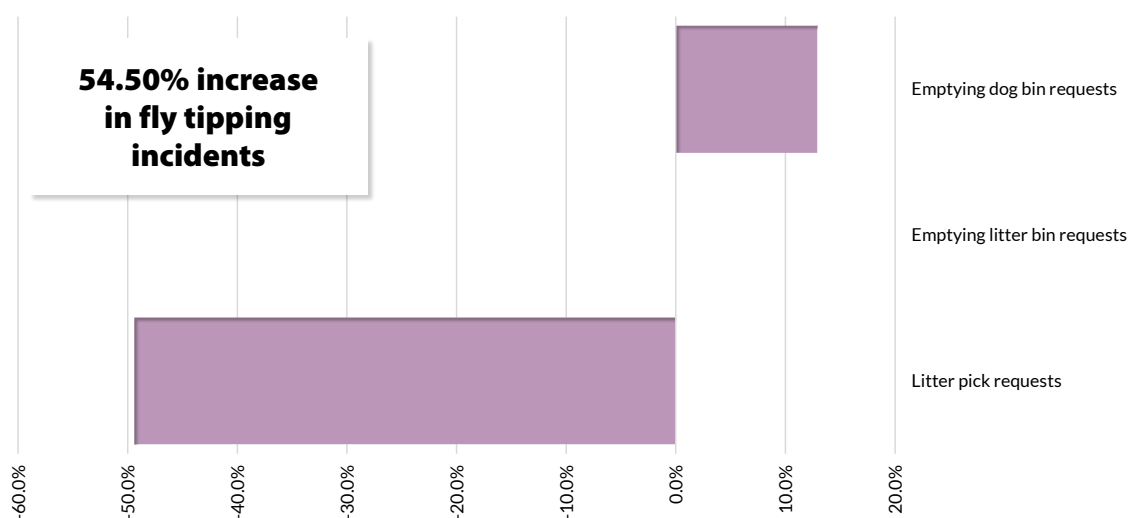
Roads: change in the number of requests for service/public enquiries



In street cleansing, requests for litter picks reduced which may be due to lower street litter levels as a result of lockdown restrictions on people's movement and business operations. On the other hand, dog bin emptying requests increased, probably due to dog walking increasing as other forms of exercise were restricted.

75% of authorities saw an increase in fly-tipping (with an average increase of 55%). Fly tipping is likely to have been impacted by the widespread closure of Civic Amenity Sites during the first couple of months of lockdown.

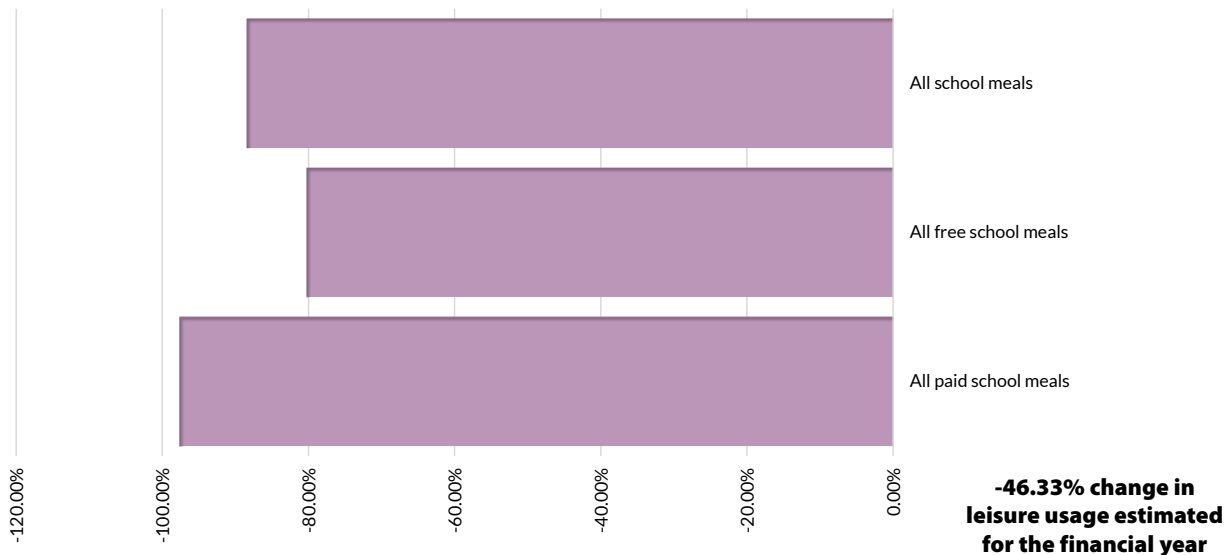
Street cleansing: service requests compared with the same period last year



Service usage

The number of free meals/packed lunches provided compared to the same period last year reduced by 88%. 90% of those meals/packed lunches served were for key workers or vulnerable children.

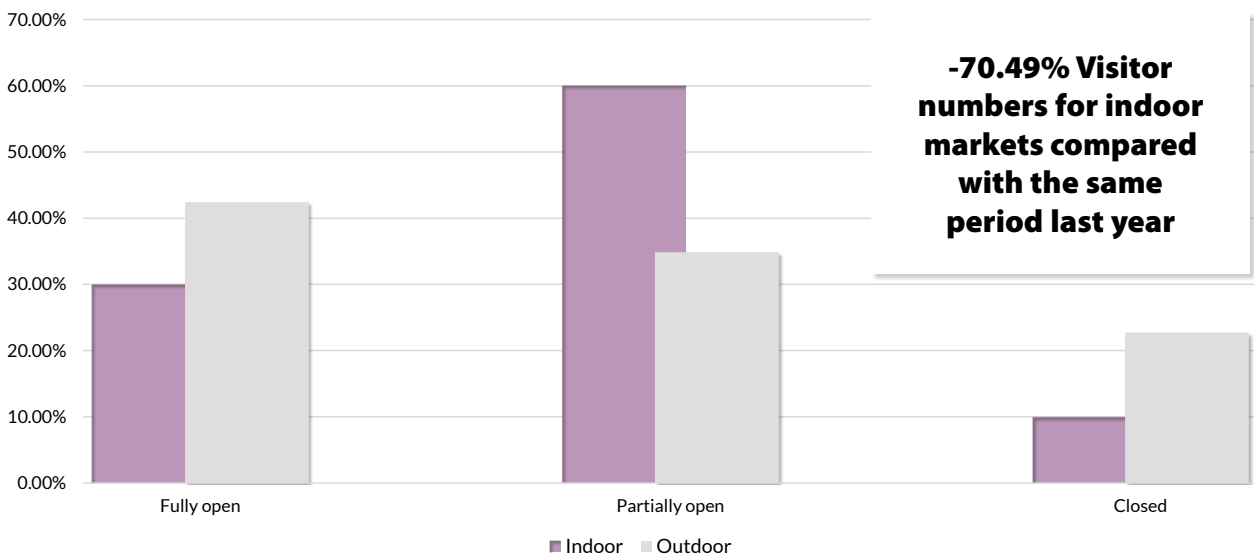
School meals provided compared to the same quarter last year



Respondents estimated that leisure usage is going to be down by 46% this year, although this was the prediction in August and September 2020 before further lockdowns.

The chart below shows the impact on markets. Most markets were at least partially re-opened by the end of the first quarter but visitor numbers for indoor markets were down by 70% compared with the same quarter last year.

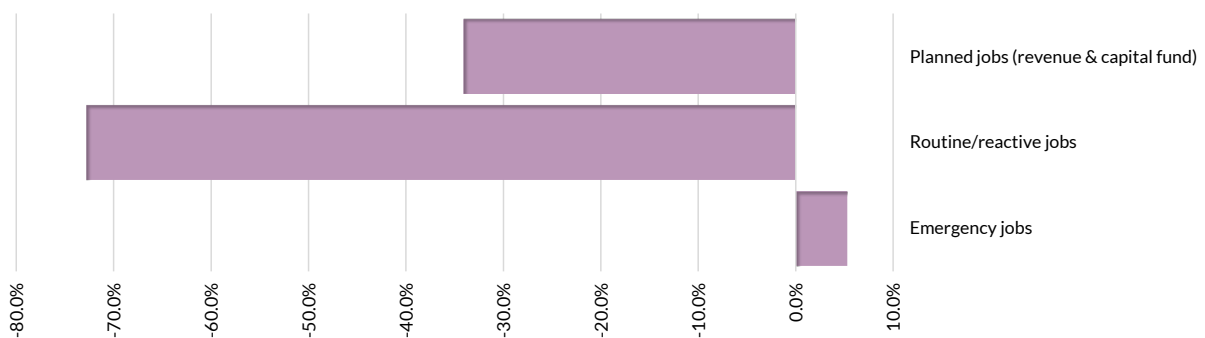
Markets as at 30 June 2020



Works data

So, what has the effect been on work or productivity for the services? On building maintenance, the breakdown of types of job completed is shown in the chart below. Reactive jobs are nearly 73% down on the same period in 2019. Planned maintenance jobs are only 34% down. There was a 5% increase in emergency jobs, which indicates that the emergency service is being maintained. There could be a number of reasons for the increase in emergency jobs including the reduced reactive maintenance regime and more householders being at home.

Building maintenance: jobs completed compared to the same quarter last year



For roads, the average percentage of capital programme anticipated to be uncompleted by the end of the financial year was nearly 25%. However, 94% of safety inspections were carried out.

Roads average percentage of capital programme anticipated to be uncompleted by the end of the financial year

End of 2020 – 21 financial year 24.63%

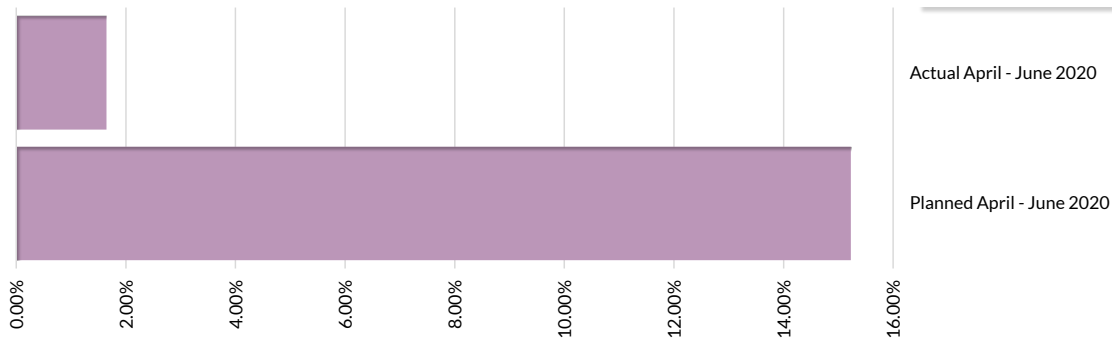
Average number of safety inspections

Percentage carried out 94.4%

The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on those authorities planning further LED upgrades during the first quarter. Of those authorities not already at 100% for LED, over 15% upgrades were planned but under 2% were achieved. Even without further restrictions, these authorities now expected to achieve around 73% of this year's LED upgrade programme.

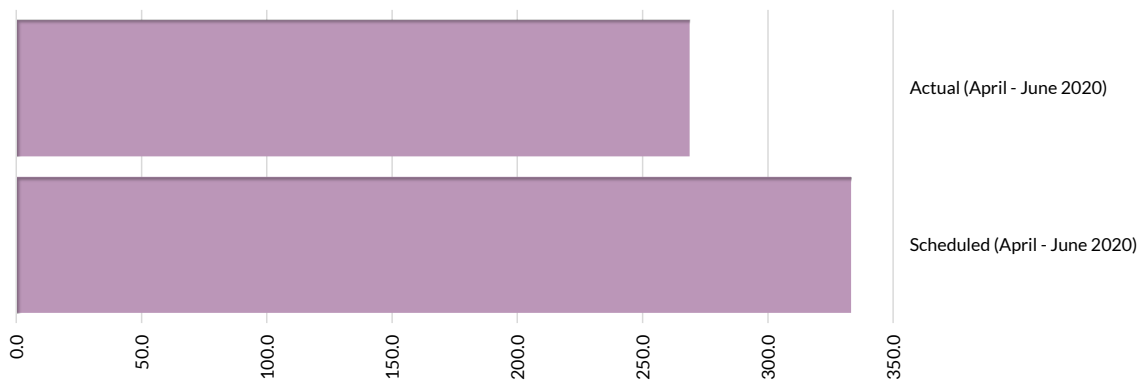
LED upgrade programme (capital) within the three month period

**72.50%
Completion by
March 31st 2021**



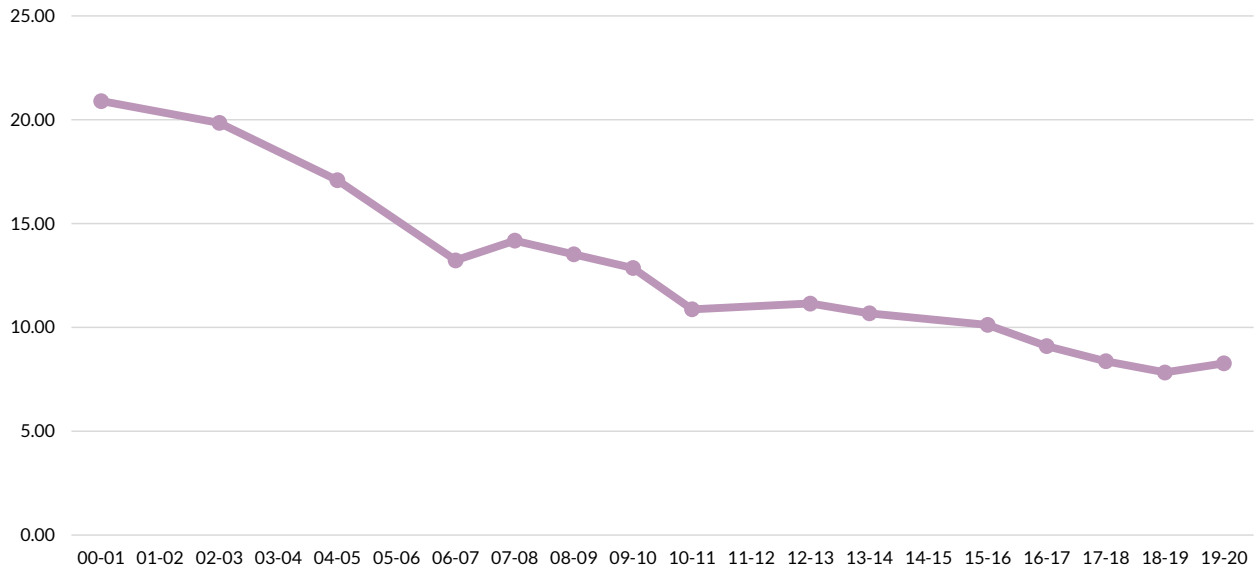
For transport, on average, nearly 20% of scheduled council vehicle services were postponed in April-June creating a backlog already.

Transport: Council vehicles serviced



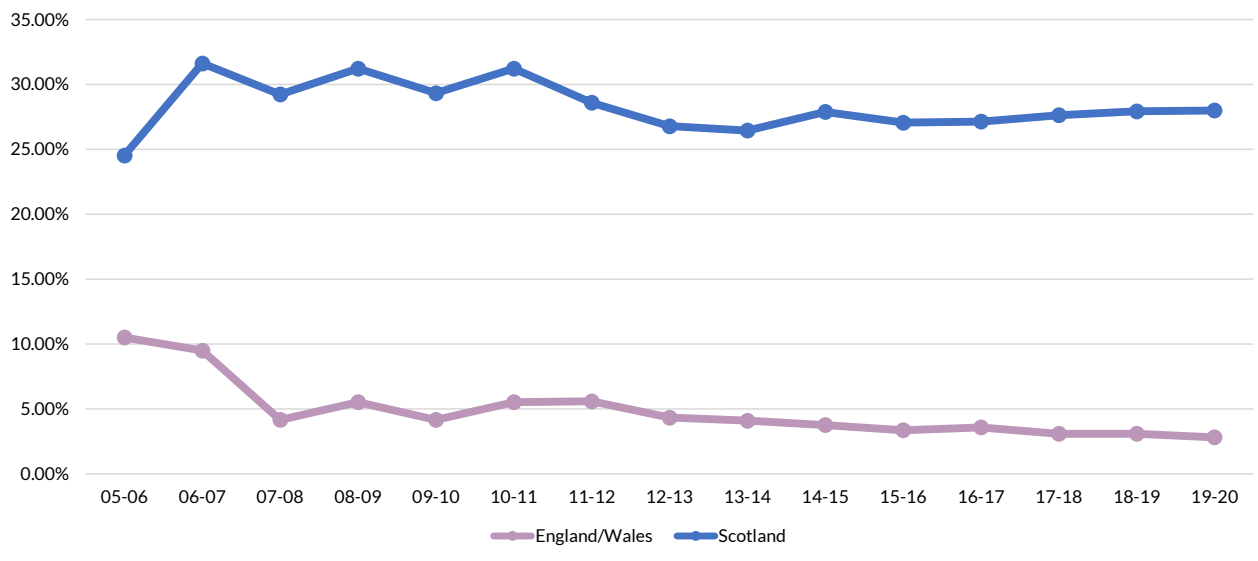
If we look at some of the past trends for some of these services pre-Covid-19, we can notice how the improvements of recent years may be affected this year by the pandemic. In building maintenance, the average time taken to complete a routine repair had reduced from 21 days in 2000 to 8 days for 2019-20. However, we could anticipate this increasing again in next year's data collection due to the need for separate visits by tradespeople and social distancing measures.

Average time taken to complete a routine repair

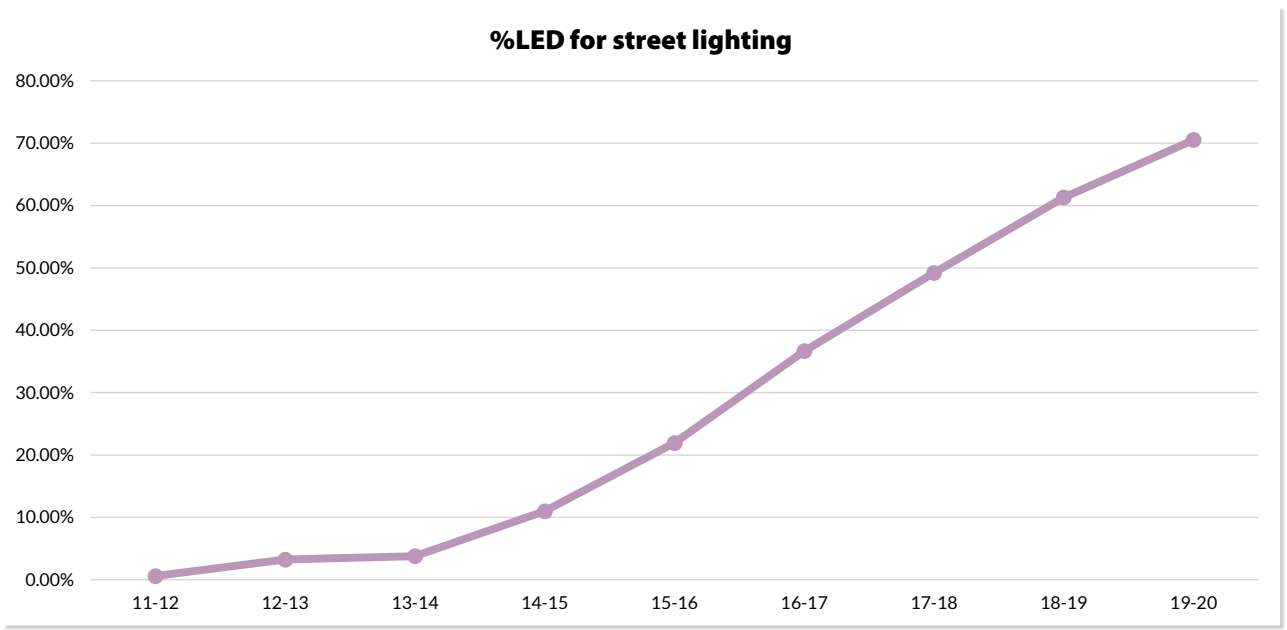


The condition of roads is measured differently in Scotland to how it is measured in England and Wales, so these are shown separately but, in both cases, the lower the percentage needing attention the better. Both have shown an improvement over the last 13 years.

Road Condition



Next year's figures may be affected by reduced works on the highway or could be affected by a change of usage on the roads through lockdowns and travel restrictions.



The % LED had soared in recent years, the latest figures being 71%. However, again this may be affected in next year's data collection by planned upgrades being delayed.

Streetscene

Parks and street cleansing both estimated that an increase in resources, both staff numbers and staff costs was required in the second quarter to bring the maintenance standards back up to normal levels by the end of the second quarter. This increase required is higher for parks than street cleansing.

Estimated requirements in the second quarter to bring the maintenance standards back up to normal levels by the end of the second quarter

Employee Numbers

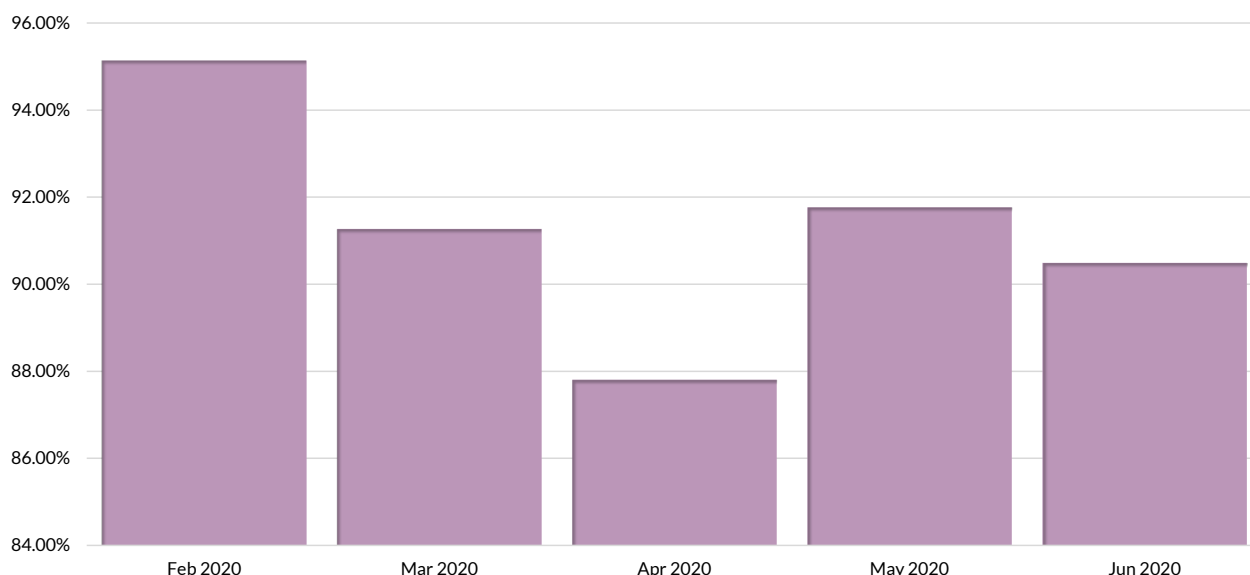
Service area	Average number in post (March 1)	Estimated required (July - Sept)	Increase
Parks and Open Spaces	95.0	113.4	19.41%
Street Cleansing	39.5	42.0	6.33%

Staff Costs

Service area	Average cost of staff (April - June)	Estimated required (July - Sept)	Increase
Parks and Open Spaces	£584,238	£666,529	14.09%
Street Cleansing	£303,362	£317,046	4.51%

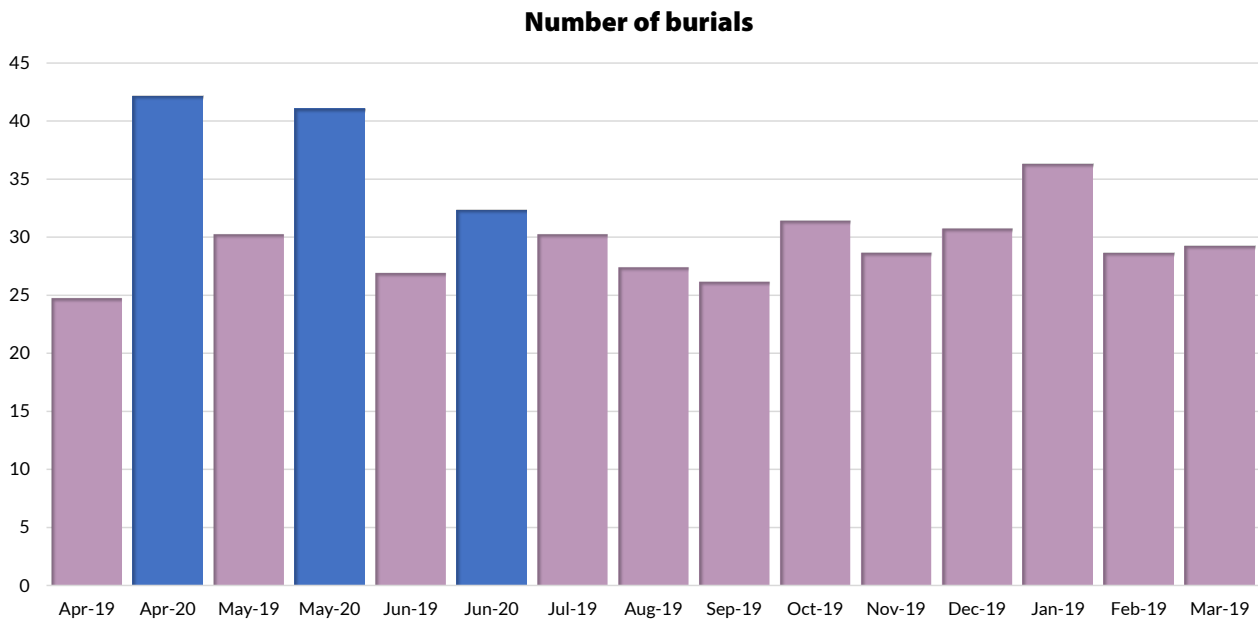
In terms of quality inspections, the percentage of acceptable sites did fall significantly in the early part of the first quarter (April) compared to February 2020 levels but improved slightly in May & June 2020.

% quality inspection surveys above Grade B



Cemeteries and Crematoria

The chart below shows the number of burials for the last financial year as purple bars and for the first quarter of this year, comparatively in blue bars. The peak in burials and cremations in April and May of this year compared to last year reflects the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, there was a 41% increase for the quarter.

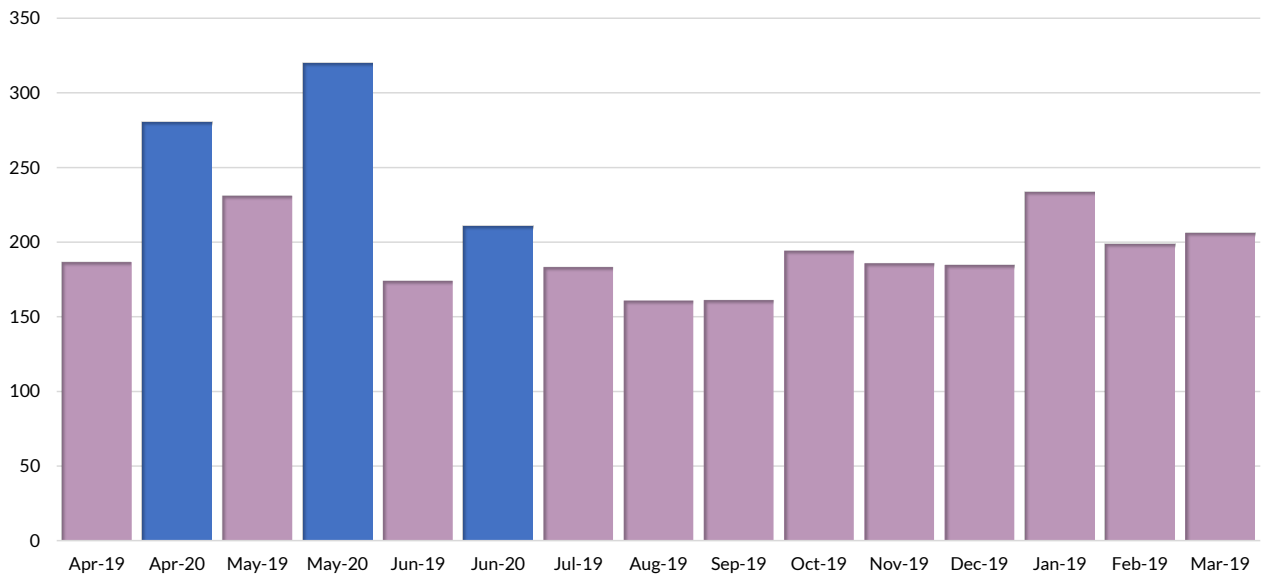


	April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Average number of burials	24.8	30.3	26.9	42.2	41.1	32.3
Percentage change				70.37%	35.81%	20.12%

	Total (April - June 2019)	Total (April - June 2020)
Average number of burials	81.9	115.6
Percentage change		41.10%

The chart below shows the comparison for cremations, which saw a 37% increase. Services requiring more human contact and interaction saw significant falls during the same two-month period. However, by June trends in both burials and cremations were reversing.

Number of cremations



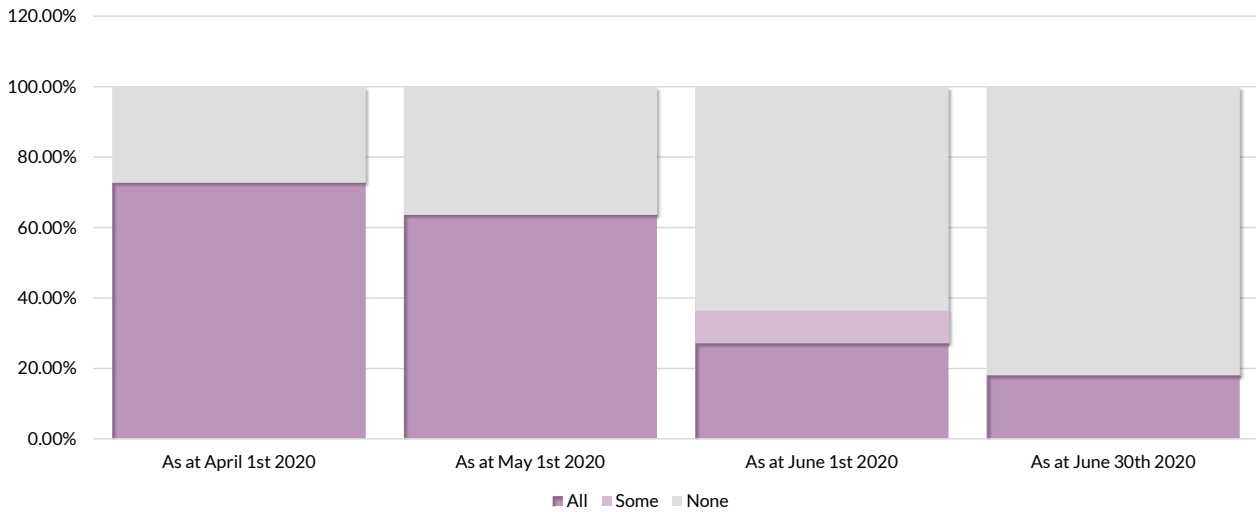
	April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020
Average number of cremations	186.6	231.0	174.0	280.4	320.2	210.9
Percentage change				50.33%	38.62%	21.20%

	Total (April - June 2019)	Total (April - June 2020)
Average number of cremations	591.6	811.6
Percentage change		37.19%

Refuse collection

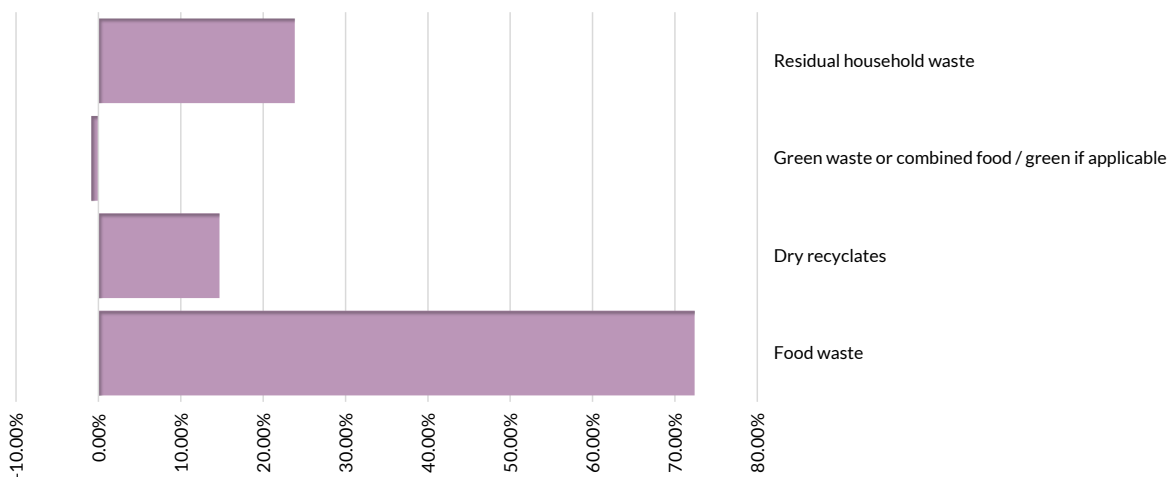
Most of the household waste recycling centres were closed during April but by the end of June, this had reduced to less than 20%.

Percentage of Household Waste Recycling Centres which were closed to the public



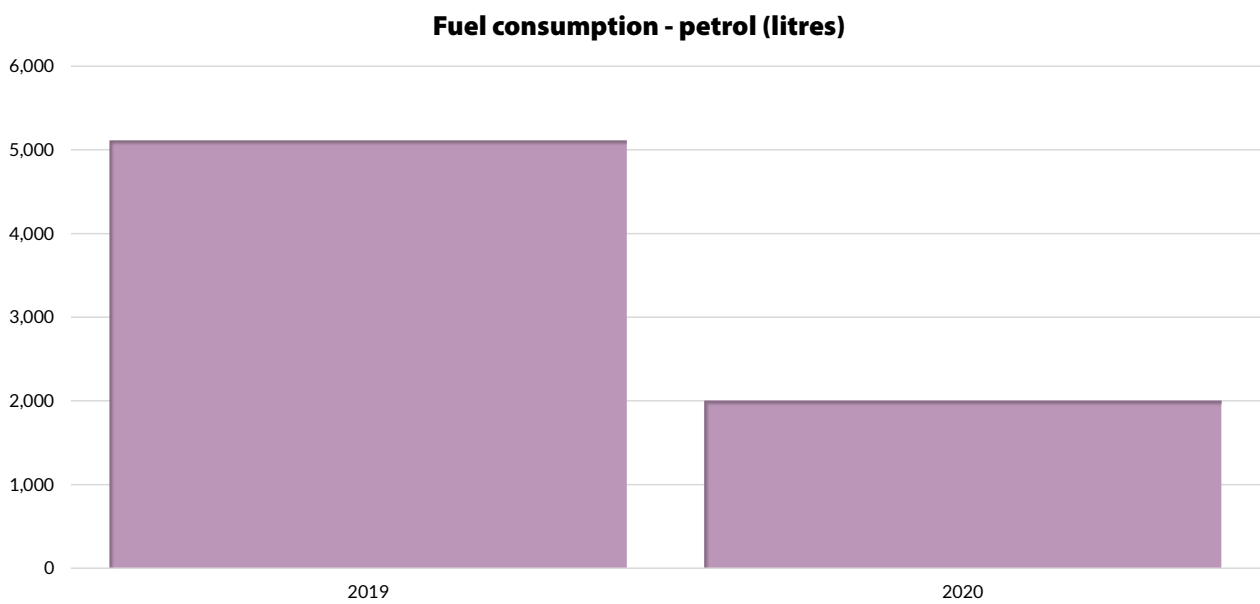
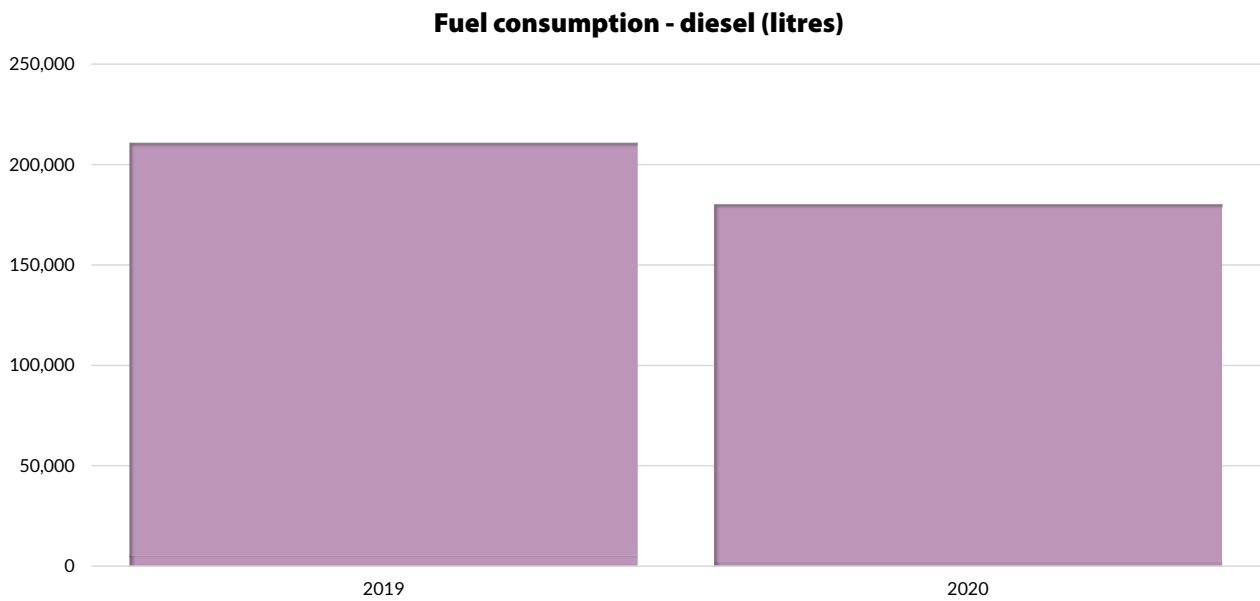
Food Waste collections were the least affected by service suspensions and the average tonnage of food waste recycled increased by 72%. At the same time, dry recyclates sent for recycling increased nearly 15%. These figures reflect increased home consumption (bulk buying / stock piling food in particular) and buying online. Residual household waste collected also increased by 24% compared to the previous year.

Tonnage of waste collected/sent for recycling or disposal – compared with the same period last year



Fuel consumption

As expected, fuel consumption decreased for the quarter. 14.5% less fuel was used in the first quarter (April-June) compared to the same period in 2019.



APSE Comment

APSE would like to thank all the authorities that participated in the working groups and the data collection exercises for April-June 2020 on the impact of Covid-19. APSE has a range of services that are designed to support member authorities through this challenging time.

[APSE COVID – 19 Information Hub and WhatsApp groups](#) – The hub has been set up to deal with frontline service issues as they arise; ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time.

[APSE Online Training](#) – APSE Training is designed to help local authorities invest in their greatest asset – their staff. With staff working at home, or remotely, APSE Training can assist staff with developing new skills during this time to help maximise opportunities.

[APSE Performance Networks](#) – The Performance Network teams have developed a variety of ways to support councils with data collection. APSE strongly recommends ensuring the collection of data is ongoing, so changes in service performance are explicable during budget setting processes or when revising business plans.

[APSE Solutions](#) – Providing in-house consultancy and interim management services, available to both APSE members and non-member authorities and organisations.

[APSE Energy](#) – Working on greening frontline councils' services, including energy management issues, which may be critical to saving money in services where budgets have been impacted by COVID-19.

[APSE membership resources](#) remain committed to supporting our member local councils with the ongoing briefings service, network queries, access to Principal Advisor advice and online meetings, advisory groups and events. There are opportunities for councils to share best practice and learning through virtual advisory groups and thematic sessions. Details of these sessions will be communicated to APSE members as the sessions are arranged.

For further information on the services that are available, please contact

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