

PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Statistics

**Scottish Local Authority Housing Income and
Expenditure**

1997-98 to 2022-23 (actuals)

2023-24 (estimates)

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1. Key Findings

Council housing income and expenditure - total HRA housing income was £1.35bn in 2022-23, of which £828m was spent on the supervision, management and maintenance of housing and £288m on loan charges. This left a surplus of £180m which was transferred to the council's housing capital expenditure account to invest in new council houses and stock improvements.

Council housing stock and rents - there were 317,554 council houses in Scotland as at March 2023. This is an increase of 1,535 houses since March 2022. Average rent per house was £79.07 per week in 2022-23, up by £1.86 on 2021-22.

Management and maintenance of stock - average expenditure on management and maintenance was £2,567 per house in 2022-23. Within this supervision and management costs were £1,011 per house. Repairs and maintenance costs were £1,556 per house.

Empty properties and rent arrears - councils lost £37m due to all empty properties in 2022-23 or 2.8% of rental income on these properties. Rent arrears on all council properties was £114m, up £12.47m (12.3%) on last year, representing 8.6% of rental income on these properties. Arrears have risen steadily since March 2013.

Housing debt - in 2022-23 councils spent £288m on loan charges to the HRA (interest, capital repayment and loan fund expenses). Total estimated council housing debt stood at £4.98bn in 2022-23 an increase of £408m (8.9%) on last year. The money is used to improve and build council housing.

2. Introduction

2.1 This publication reports council housing income and expenditure. Trends are 1997-98 to 2022-23 (near actuals) to 2023-24 (budgeted estimates). Near actuals are un-audited. Councils use this data to monitor/ plan housing finances. The requirement to account for HRA is laid out in [sections 203\(1\) and 204\(4\) of the Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#). This publication is accompanied by tables and charts. [Historical HRA data are available](#). Chart notes are at **Annex A**. Data are checked by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Figure may be affected by rounding.

2.2 Six councils transferred their housing stock to the housing association sector including: Glasgow City, Dumfries and Galloway, the Scottish Borders, Argyll, and Bute, Na h-Eileanan Siar and Inverclyde. Therefore, data are not reported for these councils. Only five councils reported impacts of the Pandemic including: higher material and contractor costs, slippage in new house building, catch up on maintenance and delays moving people into properties.

2.3 Some of the capital investment figures at the end of this publication are taken from different Scottish Government sources including the [Local Finance Return Capital and Revenue \(LFR CR\) statistics](#) and the [Local Government 2021-22 Provisional Outturn and 2022-23 Budget Estimates \(POBE\) statistics](#).

2.4 If there is a surplus (income exceeds expenditure) this may be transferred into the councils' housing capital expenditure accounts for housing capital projects. Councils can borrow to fund capital expenditure but with tight restrictions. Revenue can be used for both revenue and capital projects, but capital can only be used for capital projects. Capital expenditure is additional to HRA expenditure.

An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

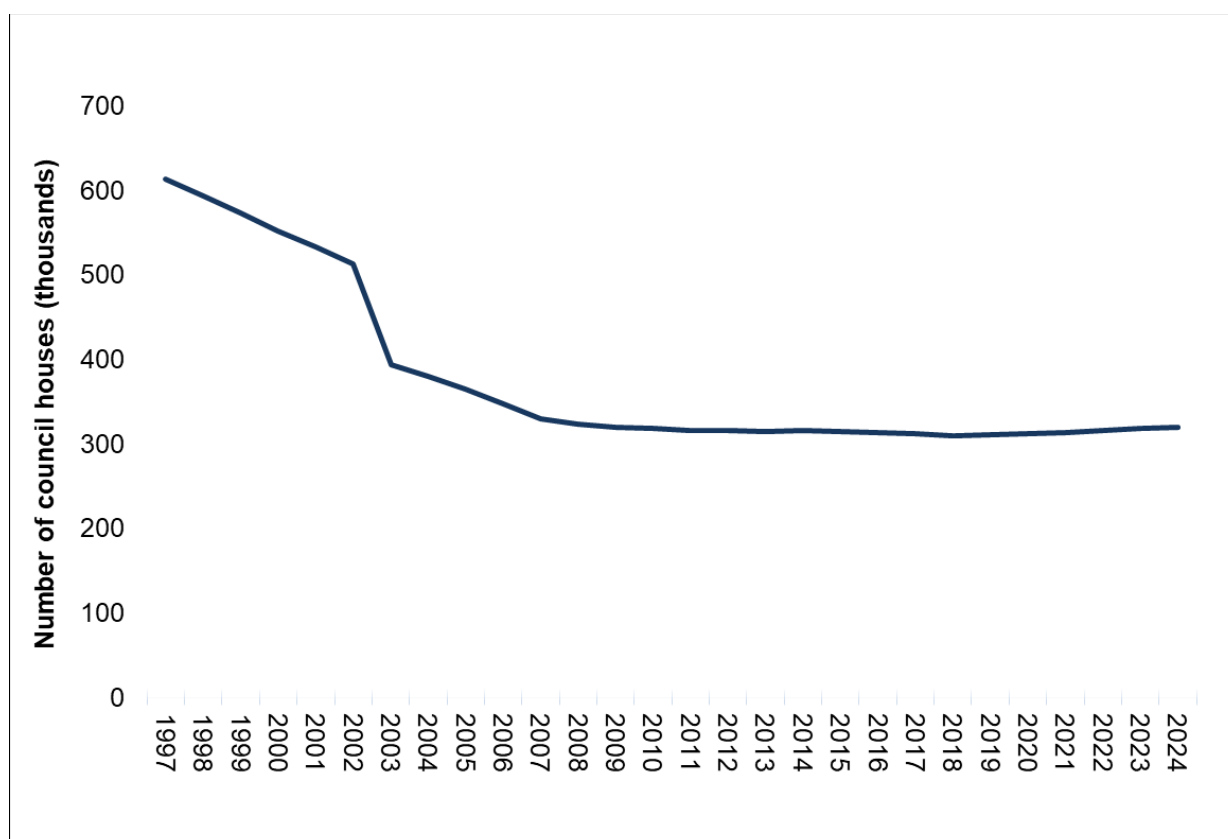
2.5 These are official statistics. Official statistics are produced by crown bodies, those acting on behalf of crown bodies, or those specified in statutory orders, as defined in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#). Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

3 Local Authority housing stock (chart 1) (table 5)

3.1. There were 317,554 council houses in Scotland as at March 2023. This is an increase of 1,535 houses since March 2022. This number is forecast to rise to 320,461 (up 2,907) by March 2024. The number of council houses had fallen by around 50% since 1997. About 150,000 of the 315,000 reduction was due to sales to sitting tenants under Right-To-Buy (RtB), around 115,000 was due to the transfer by 6 councils of their total housing stock to Housing Associations and about 50,000 was due to demolition of unsuitable stock.

3.2 The decrease in council housing stock has slowed in recent years, particularly from 2008 and has increased in the last five years of reporting. This is mainly because of reductions in council house sales under RtB to sitting tenants and additions to council housing through new council house building. Twenty-one councils had increases in their council housing stock at March 2023. It should be noted that the provision to end RtB - with a two year notice period - was included in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and the scheme subsequently closed to all new applicants on 31 July 2016.

Chart 1: Number of Council Houses per Year, Scotland [Note 1] [Note 4]



4. Housing revenue income and expenditure (charts 2a, 2b) (table 1a) (table 3)

4.1 In 2022-23, rents from council houses account for 94% of revenue income to the HRAs. Supervision, management and repairs and maintenance of houses accounts for 71% of the expenditure, while loan charges (i.e. the cost of servicing housing debt) account for 25%.

4.2 Other sources of income for Local Authorities include rents on hostels and other properties such as garages or lock-ups and interest and other charges to tenants for special services. Money is also spent on things such as, upkeep of hostels (in some council areas) and other properties, writing-off rent arrears and paying council tax on void properties.

4.3 The cost of maintaining and managing housing stock is usually less than the income received i.e. council housing makes a revenue surplus at the Scottish level. This remaining income (the surplus) is used to fund capital investment in the council housing stock as part of the Capital Programme. The use of income in this way is known as Capital Funded from Current Revenue (CFCR).

4.4 In 2022-23 total HRA income (net) totalled just over £1.35bn across Scotland and total expenditure was just under £1.2bn. Further details of expenditure and income are set out in Chart 2(a) and 2(b) below. At year end, when income is compared to expenditure, there was a surplus of £180m and £191m was transferred to councils' housing capital expenditure accounts and then invested on housing capital projects including new build council houses and enhancements to existing council stock (in addition to any day-to-day maintenance).

Chart 2(a): Housing Revenue Account Income, Scotland, 2021-22

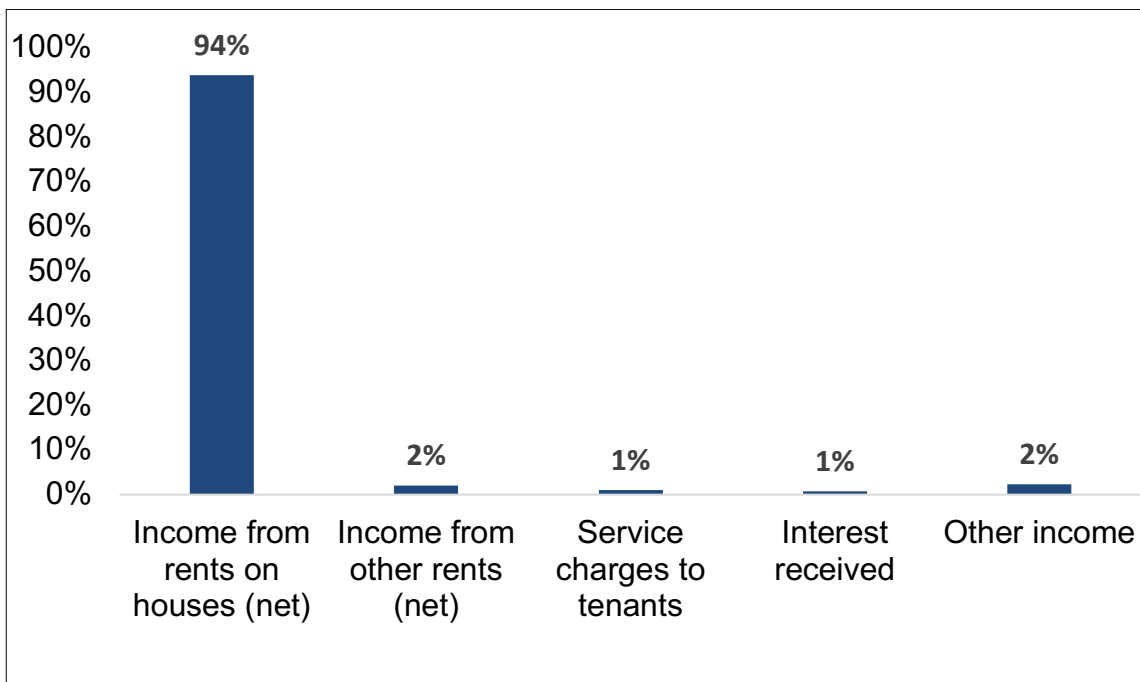
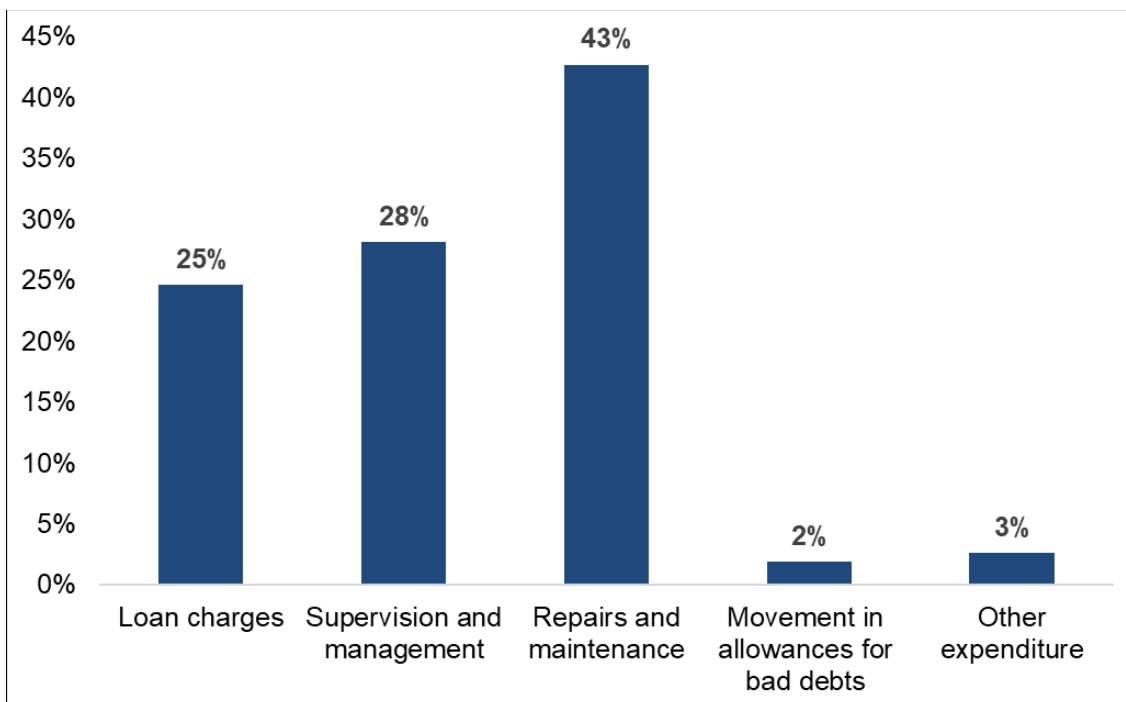


Chart 2(b): Housing Revenue Account Expenditure, Scotland, 2021-22



5. Rent levels and income from rents (charts 3, 4) (tables 1a, 8, 9)

5.1 In 2022-23 councils raised a total of £1.27bn in income (net of losses from empty properties) from standard rents on dwellings and a further £28m in rent from other HRA properties such as garages.

5.2 The average rent per dwelling (including both let and un-let properties) was £79.07 per week in 2022-23, an increase of £1.86 since 2021-22. In 2022-23 there is variation between councils in average rents, from £64.92 per week in Moray to £98.92 per week in the City of Edinburgh. As this rent data includes un-let houses the actual amount of rent paid by tenants is likely to be slightly higher.

5.3 These figures may be lower than rents reported in other publications, for example, the rent figures produced by the [Scottish Housing Regulator](#) as rather than taking a weighted average of set rents charged to tenants, they instead reflect the amount earned by the council in respect of each property owned (calculated by dividing the Council's Standard Rental Income on houses by the total letting stock). This method considers the proportion of housing which spends some time un-let and those for which rent is not successfully collected.

5.4 Housing benefits accounted for a high proportion of council rental income. In 2022-23, rent rebate subsidy for council house tenants was £428m, representing 33% of total income from standard rents. In 2022-23, rent rebate subsidy as a proportion of standard rents varied from 21% in the Shetland Islands to 64% in South Ayrshire.

Chart 3: Average Weekly Rent, per Housing Revenue Account Property per Week, Scotland, 1997-98 to 2021-22 [Note 2] [Note 3] [Note 4] [Note 9]

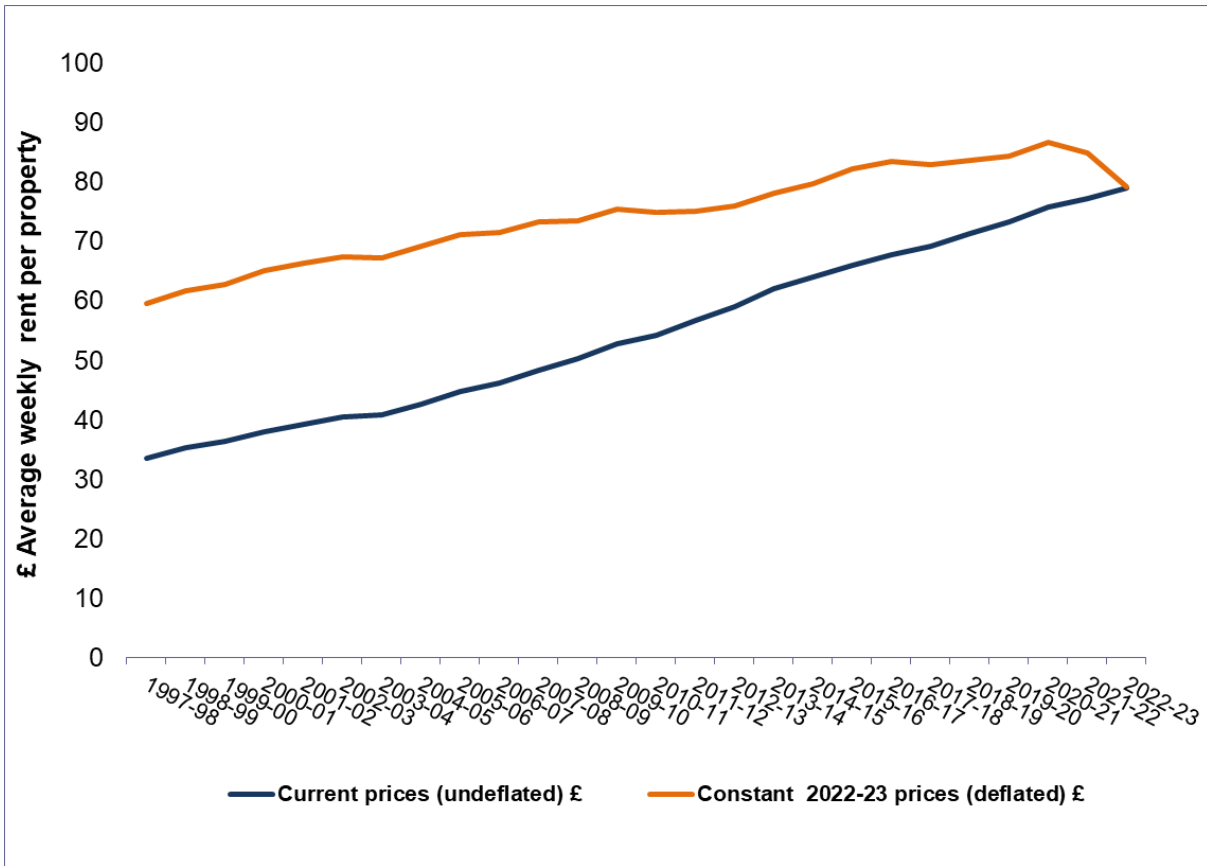
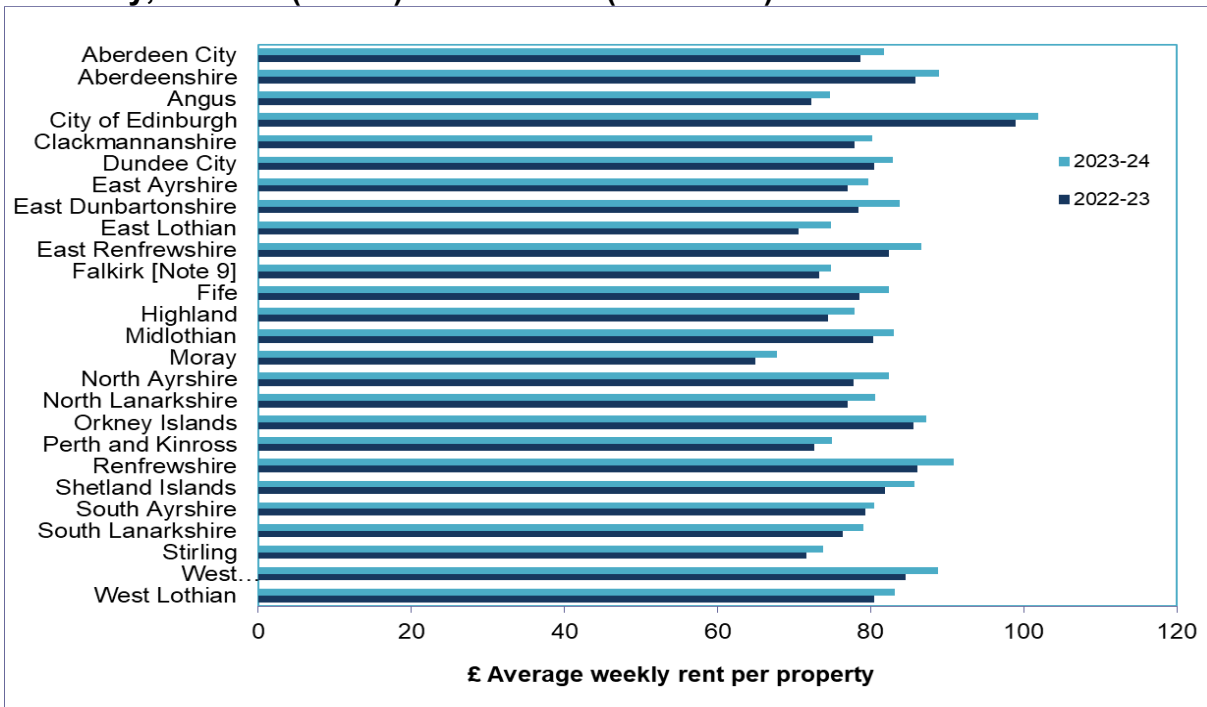


Chart 4: Average Weekly Rent, per Housing Revenue Account Property, by Local Authority, 2021-22 (actual) and 2022-23 (estimates)



6. Expenditure on housing management and on repairs and maintenance (charts 5, 6, 7) (tables 10, 11, 12)

6.1 In 2022-23 councils spent on average £2,567 per house on management and maintenance, which is forecast to fall by 0.9% to £2,545 in 2023-24. As reported earlier, some councils reported that the Pandemic has affected repairs and maintenance.

6.2 Spending on management and maintenance for 2022-23 ranges from £1,831 per house in Midlothian to £3,209 in East Renfrewshire. This reflects differing service provision amongst councils.

6.3 Supervision and management costs in 2022-23 were, on average, £1,011 per house and are forecast to increase to £1,058 per house in 2023-24. As councils differ in the extent to which central administration and related service costs are included, individual figures may not always be directly comparable.

6.4 Average annual expenditure on repairs and maintenance was £1,556 per house in 2022-23 and is forecast to decrease to £1,486 or -4.5% per house in 2023-24. Spending on repairs and maintenance in 2022-23 ranges from £943 per house in Perth and Kinross to £2,305 per house in the Shetland Islands.

6.5 Please note that the HRA repairs and maintenance expenditure referred to in the above paragraphs is separate, and in addition to, the capital investment in council housing stock enhancements referred to elsewhere in this statistical publication.

Chart 5: Supervision and Management Expenditure Per House, Scotland, 1997-98 to 2021-22 [Note 2] [Note 4]

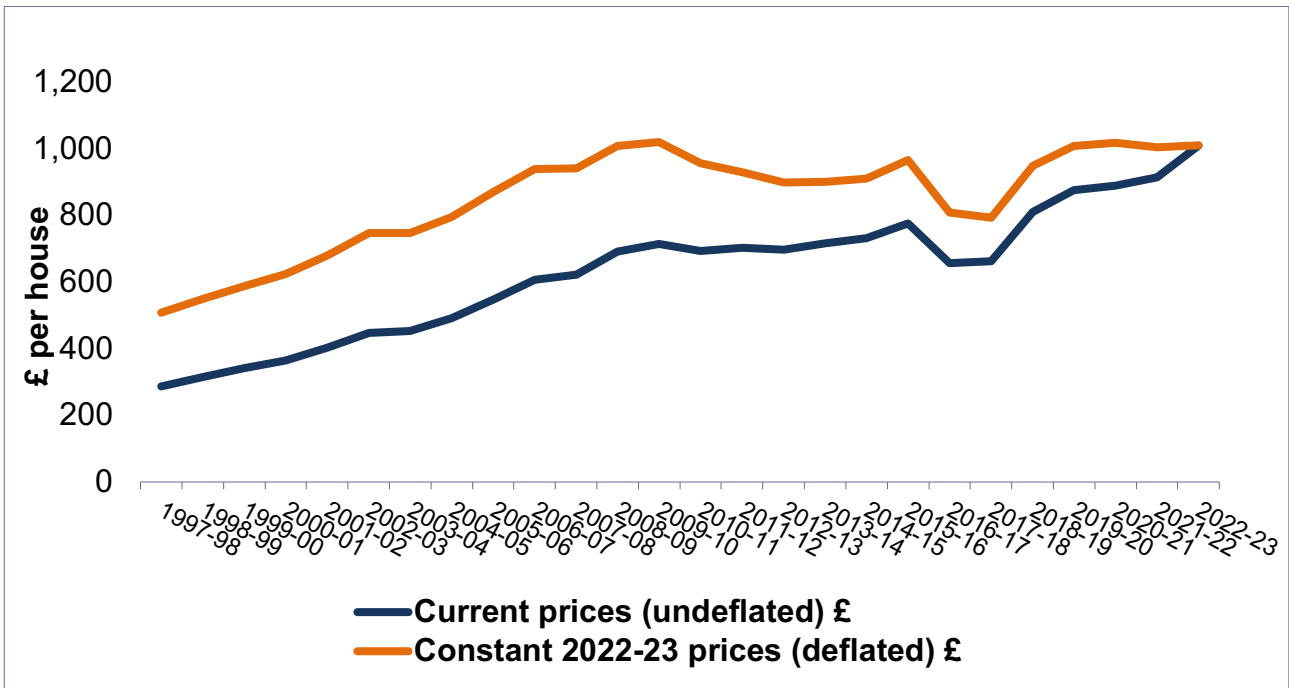


Chart 6: Repairs and Maintenance Expenditure Per House, Scotland, 1997-98 to 2021-22 [Note 4]

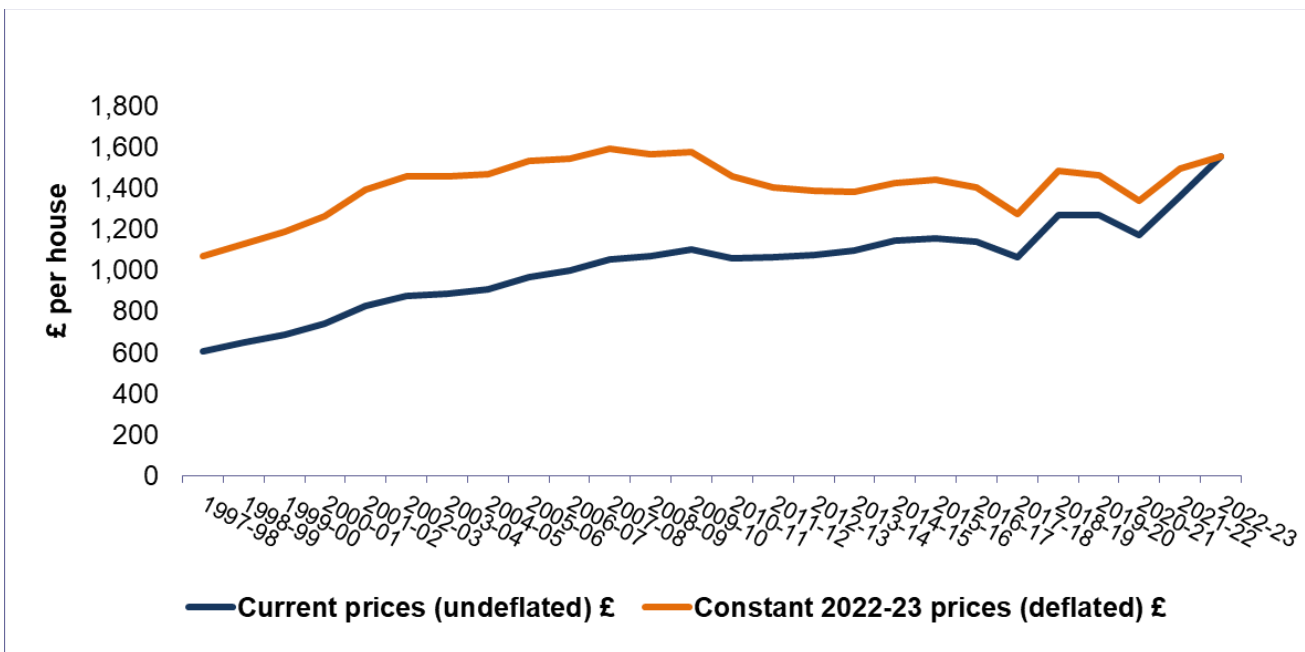
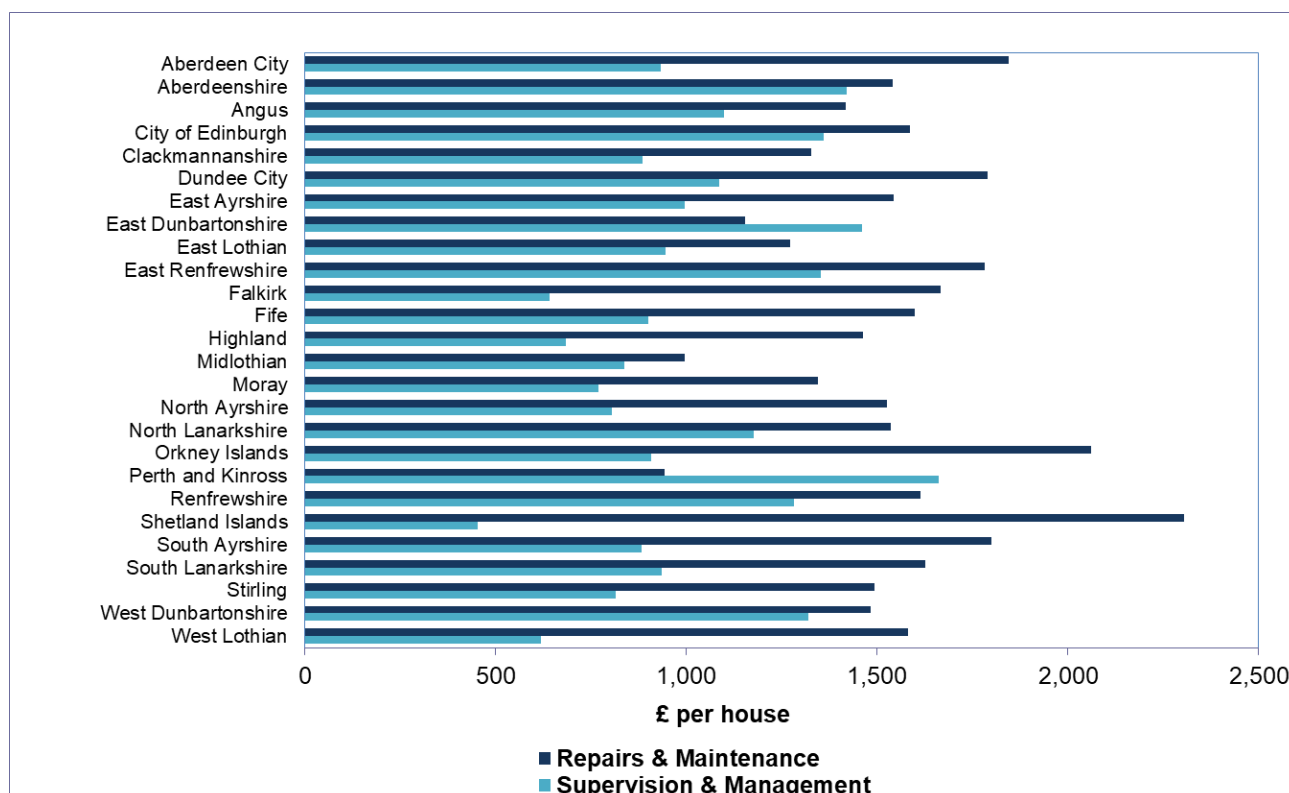


Chart 7: Management and Maintenance Expenditure Per House, by Local Authority, 2021-22



7. Expenditure on loan charges (table 1a)

7.1 Loan charges are the repayment of principal and interest on outstanding debt on council houses. Local Authorities spent £288m on loan charges to the HRA in 2022-23. Loan charges represent approximately 25% of all Local Authority housing expenditure (excluding capital spend) in 2022-23.

8. Rents lost due to empty properties (void losses) (charts 8, 9) (tables 14, 15)

8.1 Councils lost £37m due to un-let all types of properties held on their HRAs in 2022-23 representing 2.8% of total rent income from all properties. From 2008-09 the statistics collected from Local Authorities have separately identified rents lost from un-let dwellings. For Scotland as a whole, rents lost due to un-let dwellings amounted to £31m in 2022-23 representing 2.4% of total rent income on these dwellings.

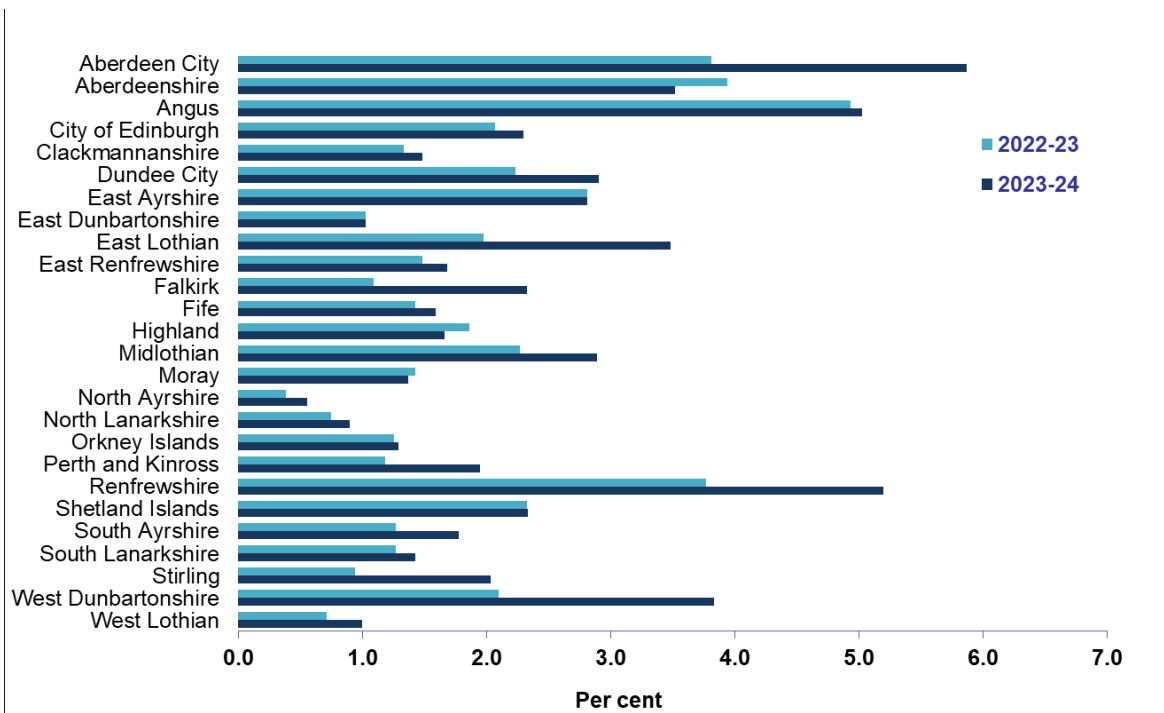
8.2 The percentage of rent on dwellings lost through voids in 2022-23 was highest in Aberdeen City and (5.9%) and lowest in North Ayrshire (0.6%). Levels of rent lost may be strongly influenced by factors such as different levels of demand for properties, different

void management practices and targets, decanting for improvement or investment programmes or the inclusion of properties awaiting demolition.

Chart 8: Rents Lost Through Un-let Properties as a Percentage of Standard Rental Income, Scotland, 1997-98 to 2022-23 (estimates) [Note 4]



Chart 9: Rent Lost as a Results of Unlet Dwellings as a Percentage of Gross Rental Income, Scotland, 2021-22 (actual) and 2022-23 (estimate)



9. Rent arrears and the rents written-off (charts 10, 11) (tables 16a, 16c, 17a, 17c, 19a, 19b, 20)

9.1 Total rent arrears on all HRA properties at 31 March 2023 was £114m, a rise of £12.5m (12.3%) since 31 March 2022. Nationally, rent arrears at 31 March 2022 represent 8.6% of Standard Rental Income on all properties on the HRA compared with 7.8% at 31 March 2022 and is the highest value recorded over the past decade.

9.2 From 2008-09 the statistics collected from Local Authorities have separately identified rent arrears on dwellings, from rent arrears in other types of HRA property.

9.3 As at March 2023, rent arrears on council dwellings was £110m, up £10.5m (10.6%) on last year, representing 8.4% of Standard Rental Income from these dwellings. Rent arrears on dwellings varied from 16.5% of Standard Rental Income from dwellings in Midlothian to 1.2% in East Renfrewshire.

9.4 At 31 March 2023 there were 111,618 council tenants in arrears, an increase of 1,272 tenants (a 1.2% increase) compared to 31 March 2022. The number of former tenants in arrears increased by 1,799 (a 1.0% increase) from 29,854 at March 2022 to 30,163 as at March 2023.

9.5 In 2022-23 budgets, councils wrote-off £10.5m of outstanding rent as unrecoverable (this represents 0.8% of Standard Rental Income) compared to £11.7m in the previous year. Write-offs for 2022-23 varied from none in Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, East Dunbartonshire and the Orkney Island to £1.4m in North Lanarkshire. The amount of arrears written-off by councils can be influenced by councils' accounting policies and judgements on whether arrears are recoverable.

Chart 10: Rent Arrears as a Percentage of Total Rental Income on All Properties on the Housing Revenue Account, Scotland, 1997-98 to 2021-22 [Note 4]

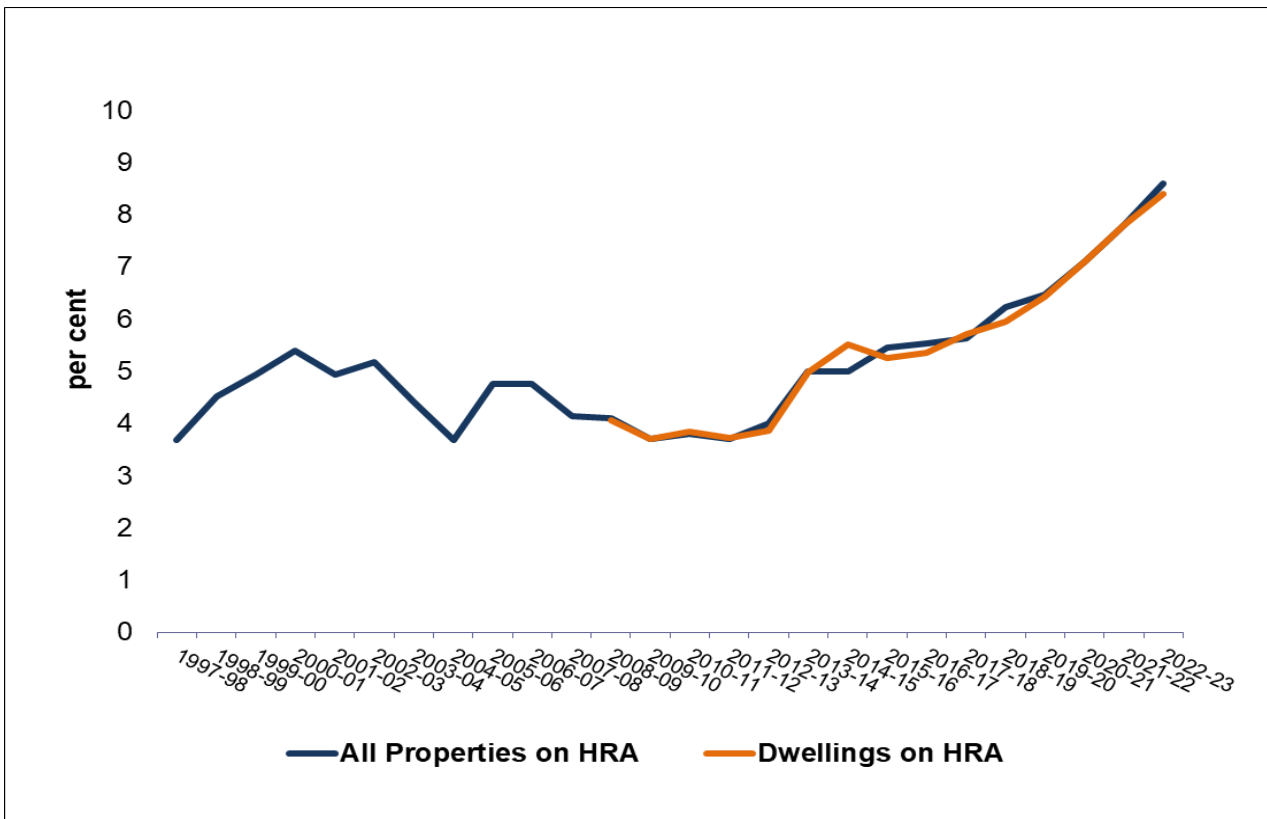
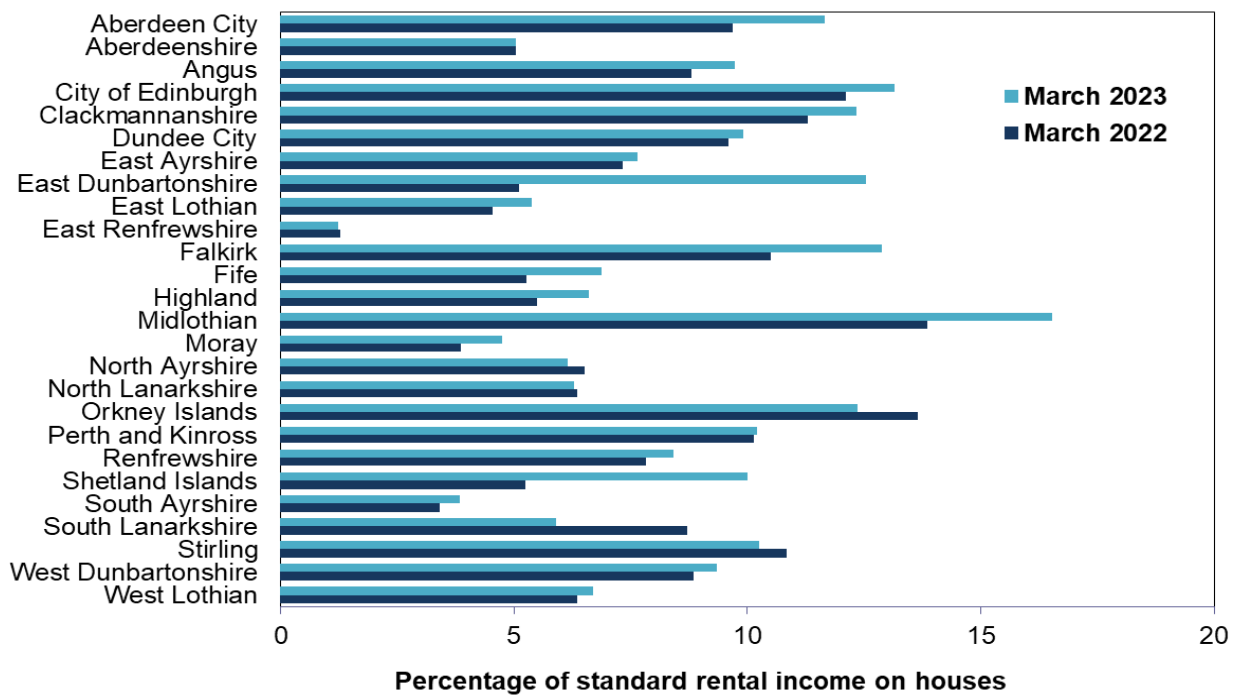


Chart 11: Rent Arrears at 31 March as a Percentage of Annual Standard Rental Income on Dwellings, by Local Authority, March 2021 to March 2022



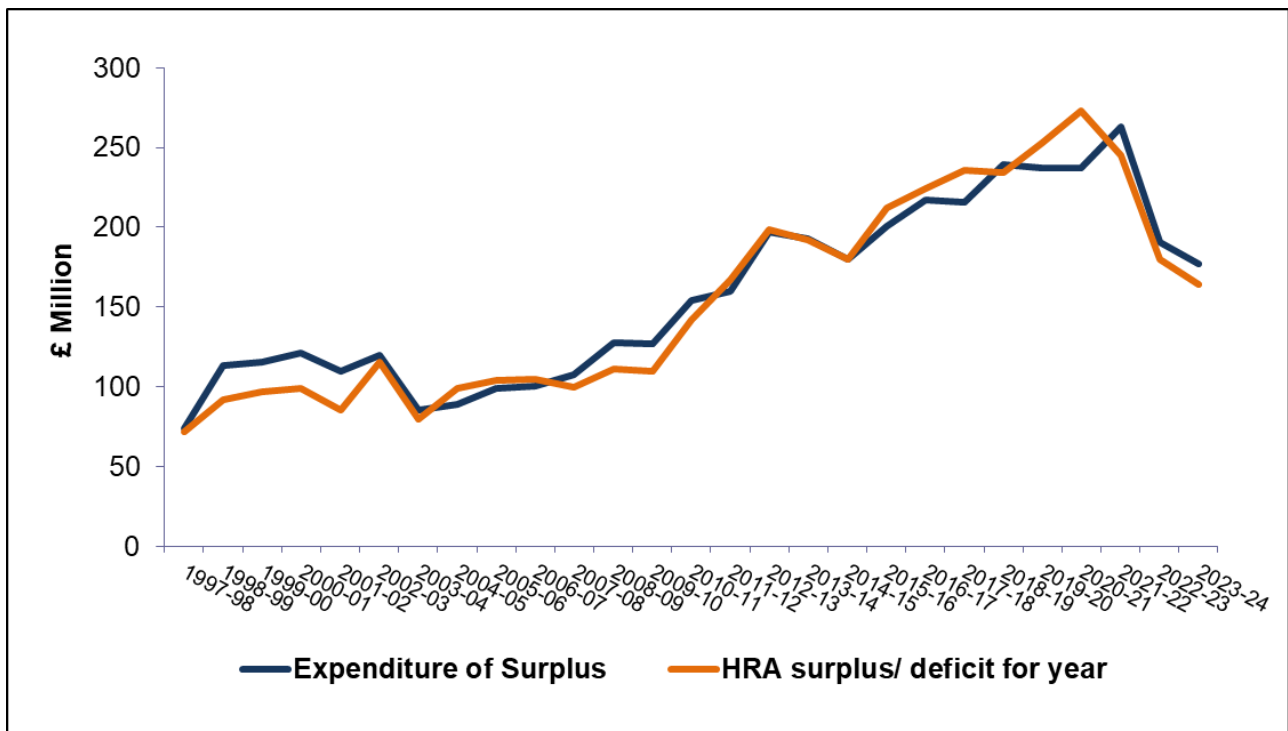
10. Movement in the HRA reserves (chart 12) (tables 2a, 3)

10.1 In any given year, expenditure on the day-to-day maintenance and management of council housing tends to be less than the income from council house rents. The surplus income is spent on capital investment in housing including new council houses and improvements to existing stock (these improvements are in addition to the day-to-day maintenance) or added to the HRA reserves.

10.2 In 2022-23 Scottish Local Authorities had a surplus on their HRA (i.e. income minus expenditure) totalling £180m, which contributed to £191m of capital funded from revenue when added to other transfers into the HRA from other funds.

10.3 In 2022-23, £34m was transferred out of the HRA fund into other council funds such as the Housing Repairs and Renewals, Contingency Fund Funds or the HRA Capital Plan. Equally some small sums were transferred into the HRA fund (£30.3m in 2022-23).

Chart 12: HRA Surplus at Year End, Scotland, 1997-98 to 2022-23 (estimates) [Note 4]



11. Capital debt (table 21, table 1a)

11.1 A Local Authority may borrow to fund capital expenditure. Local Authorities may borrow from several sources including banks and other financial institutions. Most Local Authorities borrow from the UK Government's Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). In addition to borrowing Local Authorities may finance capital investment through other credit arrangements, such as finance leases, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) or Public Finance Initiatives (PFI). The sum of borrowing and any credit arrangement to finance capital investment is termed Capital Debt.

11.2 Total council housing debt stood at £4.98bn in 2022-23 an increase of £408m (8.9%) on the previous year and cost £288m in loan charges. Part of the increase in debt since 2007 is a consequence of increased borrowing by councils to meet the capital costs of new build housing and improvements to existing houses and reductions in receipts from the sale of council houses under RtB scheme which closed on 31 July 2016. Total HRA debt is estimated to rise to £5.78bn by 2023-24 (up £791m).

12. Capital investment (charts 13, 14) (tables 22a, 23)

12.1 These capital investment figures are not from the HRA data collection but are instead taken from the Scottish Government local government finance data collections including the [Local Finance Return \(LFR\) Capital Return \(CR\)](#) and the [Provisional Outturn and Budgeted Estimates \(POBE\)](#).

12.2 Local Authorities' provisional capital investment on HRA housing, financed from all sources (including new borrowing, useable receipts and financed from the CFCR from the HRA surplus) in 2022-23 is £1.1bn. This includes £491m on improvements to existing council houses, £482m on new council houses and £95m on other capital expenditure. This expenditure is in addition to the day-to-day maintenance referred to earlier. The councils with the greatest capital investment in new council dwellings in 2022-23 were Aberdeen City (£133m) and North Lanarkshire (£115m). Actual capital expenditure in 2021-22 was £950m.

Chart 13: Gross Housing Revenue Account Capital Expenditure, Scotland, 2010-11 to 2021-22 [Note 4]

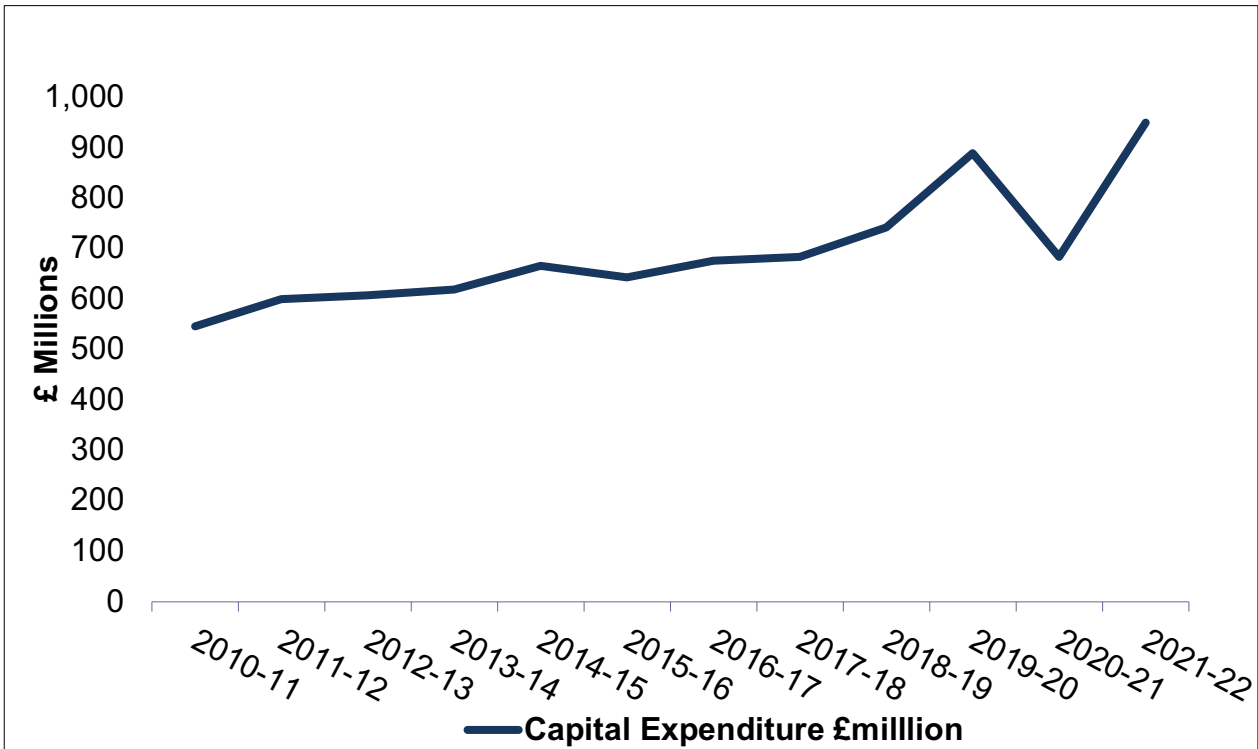
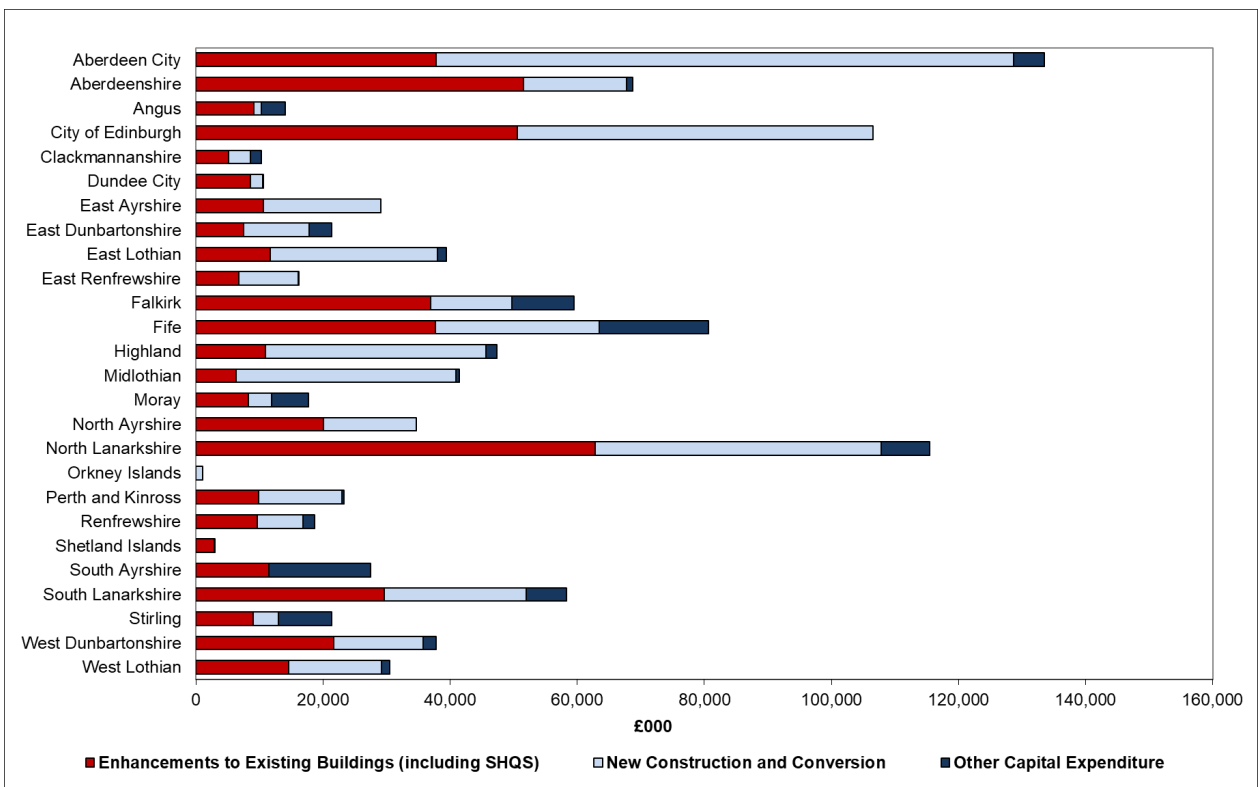


Chart 14: Capital Expenditure on House Improvement and New Building, by Local Authority, 2022-23 (Provisional Outturn) [Note 5] [Note 6]

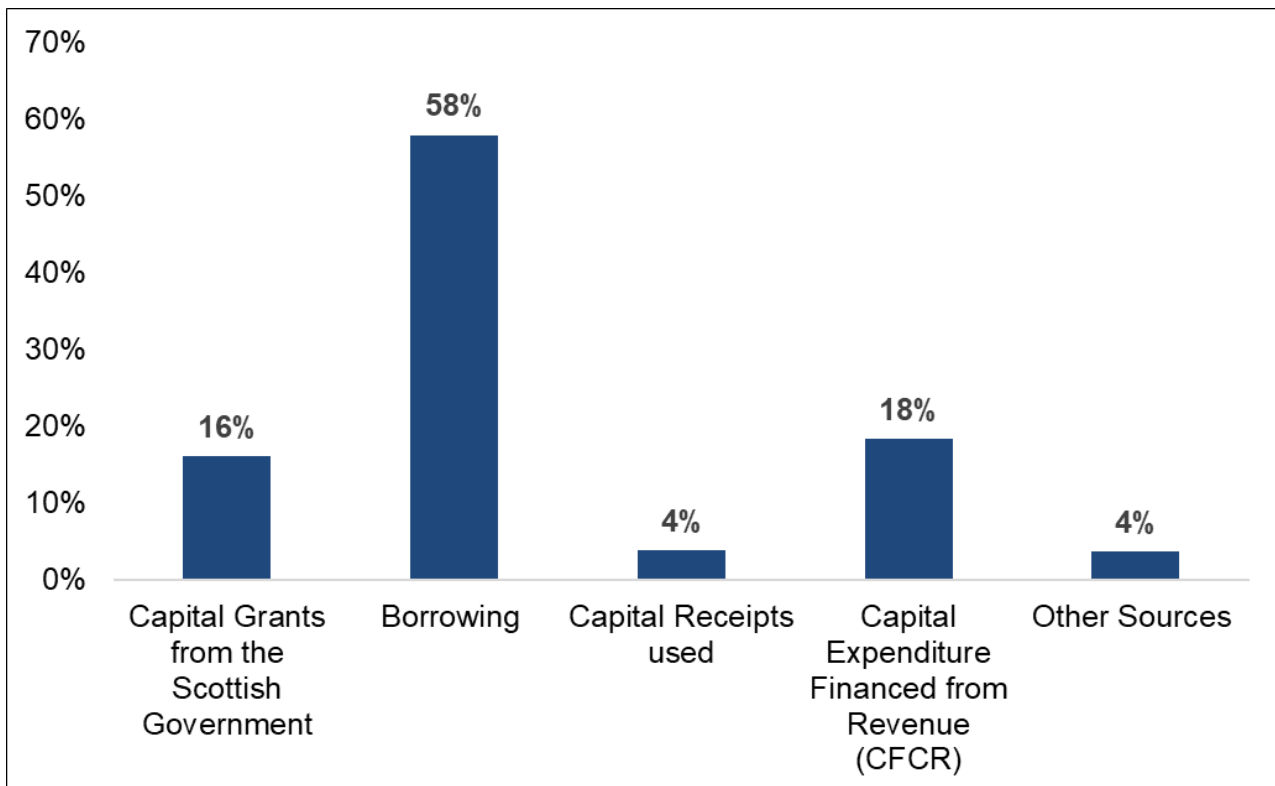


13. Funding of capital expenditure (chart 15) (table 23)

13.1 In 2022-23, provisional figures show 58% (£619m) of the funding for HRA capital expenditure was from borrowing, 18% came from the Housing Revenue Account (CFCR) (£196m), whilst 16% (£172m) came from capital grants from the Scottish Government.

13.2 Councils raised £41m of capital receipts from asset sales in 2022-23. As noted earlier the provision to end RtB - with a two year notice period - was included in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and the scheme subsequently closed to all new applicants on 31 July 2016. Historically RtB sales contributed a substantial amount of capital receipts for HRA, but this is no longer the case. However, capital receipts can also come from sales of housing land following demolition, or voluntary sales to private individuals and businesses and other parts of the wider public sector and transfers of small groups of properties to housing associations or transfers of HRA assets to other parts of the Local Authority.

Chart 15: Funding of Housing Revenue Account Capital Expenditure, Scotland, 2022-23 (Provisional Outturn)



14. Tenant Consultation by Councils about HRAs

14.1 The survey asks councils about the extent and nature of any consultation they had undertaken with tenants in the previous year, for example, in terms of how the HRA budget had been spent or plans for future HRA expenditure. A framework for the involvement of landlords and tenants regarding the HRA is set out in [A Framework for Supporting Tenant Involvement](#) and the [HRA Guide Implementation](#).

14.2 Twenty-four councils reported that they had undertaken tenant consultation about the HRA, one council said no, and one provided no reply. Frequently reported consultation topics were about rent rise proposals and HRA spending plans. Other topics included:

- impacts of the cost of living crisis
- value for money
- new build lettings plans
- plans for Gypsy/Traveller sites
- council housing stock improvements
- service delivery
- tenant priorities
- affordability

14.3 Councils reported a variety of methods used to consult tenants about the HRA including:

- tenant working groups and committees
- tenant mailed letter
- tenant consultation
- tenant newsletters
- tenant magazines
- tenant meetings (virtual and face-to-face)

14.4 Councils were also asked if they had done an Audit of Compliance with the [Guidance on the Operation of Local Authority HRAs in Scotland](#). Six councils reported that they had. Twenty said no but with several of these reporting plans to do this or that it was done in the recent past.

14.5 Eleven councils reported they had used the HRA Self-Assessment Framework. Fifteen said no but with several of these reporting plans for this or that it had been used in the past.

14.6 Another survey question asks the following “In 2021-22 have any HRA surpluses been used to fund non-HRA costs incurred due to COVID-19, and if so, by how much (£)?”. All twenty-six councils said no.

15. An Analysis of Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation

15.1 In 2022 the Scottish Government added two questions to the HRA survey to gather information on councils’ income and expenditure on Gypsy/Traveller accommodation. The first year of data for 2021-22 was experimental and the decision was taken not to publish it until a fuller set of survey responses had been received. This is now the case.

15.2 The data gathered will add to the Scottish Government evidence-base on Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation, helping it understand the costs of running Gypsy/Traveller sites and rental income generated. It will help build an understanding of investment needs to inform future funding policy as part of wider work being progressed under the Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan.

15.3 The Gypsy/Traveller Action Plan, [Improving the lives of Gypsy/Travellers](#), published in 2019, includes a key commitment to review housing and investment programs, to ensure that the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are included going forward. As a result, the [Housing to 2040](#) strategy announced a [Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Fund](#) of up to £20 million from 2021-26 for more and better Gypsy/Traveller accommodation.

15.4 In discussion with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community, an [Interim Site Design Guide](#) has been published to sit alongside the Fund to assist public sector providers of Gypsy/Traveller sites to design high quality accommodation that meets the varying needs of families, including children, older and disabled people. Demonstration projects are under way, trialing the Site Design Guide, exploring what good quality Gypsy/Traveller accommodation that reflects Housing 2040 principles looks like, and seeking cost effective ways of delivering it. We have commissioned an external evaluation of the Fund and Design Guide.

15.5 Seven of the twenty-six councils provided a response to the new questions and these were; Angus, Clackmannanshire, the City of Edinburgh, Fife, Perth and Kinross, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire. This included all the councils which the Scottish Government were expecting to receive information from.

15.6 Councils reported the following HRA income and expenditure (£000) on Gypsy/Traveller accommodation:

- rental income (£606k)
- supervision and management expenditure (£293k)
- repairs and maintenance expenditure (£270k)
- total rent arrears at 31st March (£87k)

15.7 Councils were asked if there were any other items of income or expenditure on Gypsy/ Traveller accommodation that they included on the HRA. None did, but one said that their Gypsy/ Traveller site is held in the General Fund rather than the HRA.

Chart Notes

Note 1: The provision to end RtB - with a two year notice period - was included in the Housing (Scotland) Act which received Royal Assent on 1st August 2014, and the scheme subsequently closed to all new applicants on 31 July 2016.

Note 2: Current prices: Scottish Government, Communities Analytical Division - based on Housing Revenue Account return provided by Scottish Local Authorities. Constant prices: ONS Consumer Price All Items Index on which 2015 = 100. Current (or nominal) prices are in the value of currency for that particular year. Current price is affected by inflation. Constant (or real) prices adjust for the effects of inflation and used to measure the true growth of a timeseries. Constant prices have been deflated using the [Consumer Price Index \(by ONS\) CPI INDEX 00: ALL ITEMS 2015=100 - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/indices/articles/cpi-index-00-all-items-2015-100).

Note 3: This calculation includes both let and un-let properties and therefore the amount of rent actually paid by is likely to be slightly higher.

Note 4: For charts showing time series there are three breaks in comparability following transfer of housing stock as follows: from 2003-04 transfer of housing stock from Glasgow City, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders, from 2006-07 transfer of housing stock from Argyll and Bute and Na h-Eileanan Siar, from 2007-08 transfer of housing stock from Inverclyde.

Note 5: Other sources includes use of Council Tax discounts on second homes/ long term empty properties.

Note 6: Six councils transferred their housing stock to the housing association sector, therefore HRA information is not available for them.

Note 7: Data source is the Local Finance Return Capital and Revenue (LFR CR) statistics produced by the Scottish Government. This source can be found at [Scottish local government finance statistics \(SLGFS\) 2020-21: workbooks](#)

Note 8: Data source is the Local Government Provisional Outturn and Budget Estimates (POBE) produced by the Scottish Government. This source can be found at [Local Government 2021-22 Provisional Outturn and 2022-23 Budget Estimates](#)

Note 9: Figures for Falkirk and Scotland were revised in February 2024.

Data and Methodology

A set of tables and charts accompany this publication and can be accessed on the [Scottish Government Housing Revenue Account statistics webpage](#). Historical data can also be found here.

The data are collected annual by the Scottish Government using an Excel-based survey. A full set of definitions which accompany the survey can be found on the tables accompanying this publication and these are available on the above website.

Completed survey forms are required to be signed-off by the Director of Finance in each council. In Excel, the Scottish Government run a series of check on every variable for example that everything sums to total correctly and this includes cross-checks across related variables to see that the totals agree as they should. The checks also look for outlying or missing data. Where anomalies are found these are queried with councils. All the text and figures in this publication are double checked against the tables and charts by a senior member of the Scottish Government team. The HRA housing stock figures are compared to another source of these figures (when they are available) to check that they tally up correctly.

These statistics are audited by the CIPFA.

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Feedback survey

We'd appreciate it if you would complete our short [feedback survey](#) on this publication.

Enquiries

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Communities Analysis Division
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